

AB KI BAAR, COALITION SARKAR: Exit polls had given NDA a huge majority, almost in line with Modi's 400-paar forecast – though ground reports suggested a much tighter race. With BJP on its own falling short of the magic mark, Modi – for the first time since he became Gujarat CM in 2001 — will have to depend on allies to form govt. **Nitish Kumar** and **Chandrababu Naidu**, who returned to NDA's fold just before the elections, have a track record of being fickle allies. For Rahul Gandhi and INDIA, the results brought back memories of 2004, when Sonia helmed Cong to an unexpected win over Vajpayee-led NDA, which was seen to be coasting to victory on the back of its 'India Shining' campaign.

Hat-Tricky: NDA 272 Paar, INDIA Raises Bar

WINNERS



RAHUL GANDHI | In the toughest election of his career, Gandhi emerged as a major winner and the biggest player within the INDIA bloc. His strategy, approach and campaign helped Congress mount a comeback that will establish him as the chief opposition to Modi. He backed a national alliance, plumped for big compromises in seat-sharing, and alongside Mallikarjun Kharge, formed a duo that ensured coordination with allies. His two Bharat Jodo Yatras took the party back to the people. His return as an MP from UP is likely to further help Congress in its bid to shore up its presence in the north.

AKHILESH YADAV | Finally ends his losing streak, which began with a rout in 2017. SP's strong showing – it's now the 3rd largest party in LS after BJP & Cong – restores his status as a powerful satrap with a national role. The fact that this success was made possible by support from non-Yadav OBCs and Dalits means he will be a strong challenger in the country's most politically important state.

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | The TDP chief is living proof of the folly of writing a politician's epitaph. Almost consigned to history after he left NDA in 2019, when he was roundly defeated by Jagan Reddy, Naidu, jailed by his bitter rival, is now back as CM of a state where he first earned his reputation as a good administrator and reformer. With BJP falling short of a majority in LS, Naidu can marshal his numbers to try to secure disproportionate returns on issues such as a special package for Andhra Pradesh and good portfolios. May also combine with Nitish to restrain the Hindutva agenda.

NITISH KUMAR | The political gymnast has landed on his feet yet again. Bihar's results have validated his much-mocked decision to switch sides before the elections. Not only did the defection not cost him votes, it may have also helped thwart the formation of a larger social coalition that embarrassed NDA in neighbouring UP. A ruthless practitioner of realpolitik, he is likely to leverage his numbers to push demands like special category status for Bihar, even a caste census. BJP is unlikely to ask for leadership of the Bihar coalition in 2025 when state polls are due.

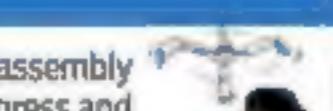
MAMATA BANERJEE | Many said this was her toughest challenge yet, with her back to the wall following repeated raids by central agencies and the Modi-Shah duo's focus on Bengal's 42 seats. But, as in the 2021 assembly polls, she has once again proved the prophecies of her decline to be vastly exaggerated. Contrary to exit poll predictions, she actually raised her LS tally from 22 to 29. A weaker BJP at the Centre could also mean less aggressive central agencies in Bengal.

M K STALIN | A staunch ally of Rahul Gandhi through good times and bad, he has led DMK and its allies to a clean sweep in Tamil Nadu. His success in thwarting PM Modi's determined bid to expand BJP's presence in TN has bolstered his political standing. AIADMK seems to be in decline, another plus for him.

UDDHAV THACKERAY | He has emerged as inheritor of Balasaheb Thackeray's political legacy. Success outside the stronghold of Mumbai without BJP's support has established his as the 'real Sena' – which could help lure back those who'd left him for Shinde. It will also strengthen his claim to be MVA's CM face in state polls.

TEJASHWI YADAV | Braving scorching sun and recurring back pain, Tejashwi spearheaded the opposition campaign single-handedly against an array of senior BJP functionaries like PM Modi, Amit Shah and JP Nadda. With the Congress brass, including Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge busy elsewhere, it was left to Tejashwi to lead the show and eventually help RJD raise its Lok Sabha tally to 4 from zero in 2019. Addressing 251 rallies and hundreds of roadshows, he has set the stage for the 2025 assembly election in Bihar, where he will seek to further improve on RJD's impressive performance in the 2020 polls.

LOSERS



YS JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | This rout in both LS and assembly is his biggest setback since he rebelled against Congress and charted his independent path. It must have come as a shock after the freebies he dispensed. The party numbers leave him vulnerable to a resurgent Naidu, whom he had jailed, and without any leverage with the Centre.

NAVEEN PATNAIK | That he could not better P K Charnaling's record as India's longest-serving CM will hurt. But it will pale before the agony caused by the double defeat on Tuesday. The loss of office in Bhubaneswar, and of the leverage he had with Delhi before the LS rout, come at a time when he is not in the best condition to mount a fightback. BJP's determination to consolidate its hard-fought gains can only cause more trouble for the veteran, who was once considered unbeatable in Odisha.

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | The SC decision to grant bail to Delhi's CM was a major reprieve for AAP and the INDIA bloc. But the script began to unravel with the assault on RS MP Swati Malaviya by Kejriwal's assistant generating unwanted headlines. The cases against him and senior AAP members dominated elections in the capital. The party's failure to win a single seat in Delhi for the third time running is a big setback for Kejriwal, who turned the polls into a virtual referendum on his incarceration with his 'jail ka jawab vote se' campaign. AAP's poor performance in Punjab in the LS elections soon after its landslide in the 2022 state polls could spell more trouble for the party and its chief.

MAYAWATI | The BSP chief has been an enigma this election. After keeping away from any anti-BJP coalition, she bet big on the Muslim vote, giving 30% of her party tickets to the community. Yet, the BSP campaign floundered, with the SP-Congress combine garnering the bulk of the Muslim vote by virtue of being the stronger anti-BJP force. The non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits who were part of BSP's base have already drifted away, largely towards BJP. Now there are signs that even the Jatavs are dispirited by the party's waning prospects and Mayawati's erratic functioning, manifested in the dramatic sacking of her nephew midway through the campaign.

YOGI ADITYANATH | Expected to deliver a handsome tally in UP on the plank of improved law & order and construction of the Ram Temple, the UP CM was unable to maintain the momentum the party had gained since 2014, when it won 71 seats. It is a personal setback for him as the saffron party suffered the maximum damage in eastern UP, its own turf. One of BJP's star campaigners, he will face a formidable challenge from a rejuvenated Akhilesh Yadav-led SP.

Illustrations: Uday Deb

Short Of Majority, BJP Has To Rely On Ambitious Allies

TEAM TOI

Narendra Modi is set to take over as PM for the third time in a row, but suffered a setback as an unexpectedly strong show by Congress, Samajwadi Party and Trinamool Congress denied him a Lok Sabha majority.

VICTORY MARGINS

Narendra Modi (Varanasi) **1.5L** (2019: 4.8L)

Amit Shah (Gandhinagar) **7.4L** (2019: 5.5L)

Shivraj S Chouhan (Vidisha) **8.2L** (2019: Did not contest)

Rahul Gandhi (Rae Bareli) **3.9L** (2019: Did not contest)

Wayanad: **3.6L** (2019: 4.3L)

Rakibul Hussain (Cong) Dhurbi: **10.1L**

Shankar Laiwanji (BJP) Indore: **10L** (NOTA 2nd, with 2.1L votes)

FULL COVERAGE: P 2-4, 6-20, FLAP INSIDE

Verdict In 21 Graphs, P 18-19

The drop of 60-plus seats was caused by losses inflicted by Akhilesh Yadav's SP in the saffron stronghold of UP, which had played a crucial role in Modi's previous two victories and the 400+ target Modi had set for himself, is still a credible performance for a govt facing 10-year incumbency.

The loss of majority leaves BJP dependent on allies – both bigger like TDP (16) and JD-U (12) as well as smaller ones like Chirag Paswan's LJP. All three promptly pledged support to Modi.

But both Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar are known for their transactional outlook and maximalist approach. The possibility of them using their leverage, encouraged further by feelers from Congress and others in the opposition, is going to be a constant worry for BJP.

Continued on P 38

THE WINNERS

North East Delhi: Chandni Chowk BJP (by 1.4L votes)

New Delhi: Bansuri Swaraj BJP (by 78.3K)

North West Delhi: Y Chandoliya BJP (by 2.9 lakh votes)

West Delhi: K Sehrawat BJP (by 2L)

Ghaziabad: NCR Atul Garg BJP (by 3.3L)

South Delhi: Ramvir Singh Bidhuri BJP (by 1.2L)

East Delhi: H Malhotra BJP (by 93.6K)

Delhi: M Tiwari BJP (by 1.4L)

Chandni Chowk: P Khandelwal BJP (by 89.3K)

Bansuri Swaraj: BNP (by 78.3K)

Y Chandoliya: SP (by 2.9 lakh votes)

K Sehrawat: SP (by 2L)

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SP: SP (by 1.4L)

BJP: BJP (by 1.4L)

SP: SP (by 1.4L)

Others: Others (by 1.4L)

NOTA: NOTA (by 1.4L)

Unaffiliated: Unaffiliated (by 1.4L)

DK: DK (by 1.4L)

None: None (by 1.4L)

Other: Other (by 1.4L)

None: None (by 1.4L)

● BJP ● Other NDA ● Cong ● Other INDIA ● Others

For comparison, 2014 and 2019 results are visualised with current NDA and INDIA alliances



UTTAR PRADESH | 80 SEATS

Samajwadi surge India's largest state gave BJP its biggest shock of the LS polls, the saffron double engine of Modi and Yogi derailing before the INDIA bloc pairing of Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi. With 37 seats, Samajwadi Party emerged as the star performer of the Congress-led alliance, putting it in its best Lok Sabha performance. Seen as overwhelming favourite, BJP fell to 33 seats (also losing Ayodhya) and NDA to 36 from 64 (BJP 62) in 2019. Its vote share fell from nearly 50% to around 43% while SP's jumped from 18% in 2019 to 33.5%. Congress won six seats (its vote share rising from 6.5% to nearly 10%), giving INDIA bloc a total of 43.

MADHYA PRADESH | 29

Saffron fortress intact After this bruising victory, as the saffron camp gets into damage-assessment mode, this is one state it needn't worry about. Building on the momentum of the 2023 Assembly polls, BJP swept all 29 seats, finally breaching the Congress citadel of Chhindwara. The Nath family's political fortunes were at stake in what was their impregnable stronghold for four decades. The 29-0 scoreline was also a boost for CM Mohan Yadav, who was propelled from the back benches of state BJP to the top post.

GUJARAT | 26

BJP clean sweep denied

Party	2014	2019	2024
BJP	26	26	25
Other NDA	1	1	1

Congress's sole win, ending its decade-long losing streak — in Banaskantha — denied BJP a hat-trick of clean sweeps, but the rest of the state reposed unwavering faith in Modi, with BJP bagging 25 of 26 seats. Union home minister Amit Shah rewrote his 2019 electoral victory margin record of 5.6 lakh by posting a thumping win in Gandhinagar, this time with a 7.4 lakh-plus margin. In Navsari, state BJP chief C R Paatil bettered his 2019 record.

RAJASTHAN | 25

Cong sees revival

Party	2014	2019	2024
BJP	25	24	14
Other NDA	1	1	8
Cong	0	0	3

Congress ended its decade-long Lok Sabha seat drought with an impressive performance as it wrested 11 seats (3 with allies) in a state where BJP had made two clean sweeps in 2014 and 2019 and recently won assembly elections. Its experiment of forming its first alliance in the state with parties like RLP, BAP and CPM paid off — in fact, BAP's Raj Kumar Roat won by more than 2 lakh votes in Banswara, the place where the PM delivered the 'mangalsutra' speech after the first phase of polling. The absence of strong state-level leadership and party veteran Vasundhara Raje from the scene hurt BJP.

JHARKHAND | 14

NDA leads, INDIA gains NDA got nine seats out of 14 in Jharkhand, of which BJP won eight and its alliance partner, Ajsu P, one. INDIA improved its performance by increasing the size of its kitty from two to five. All tribal-reserved seats went with INDIA, in a show of resentment over ED action against former CM Hemant Soren. JMM successfully tapped into tribal sentiment against central govt refusing a separate Sarna code in the Census register.

PUNJAB | 13

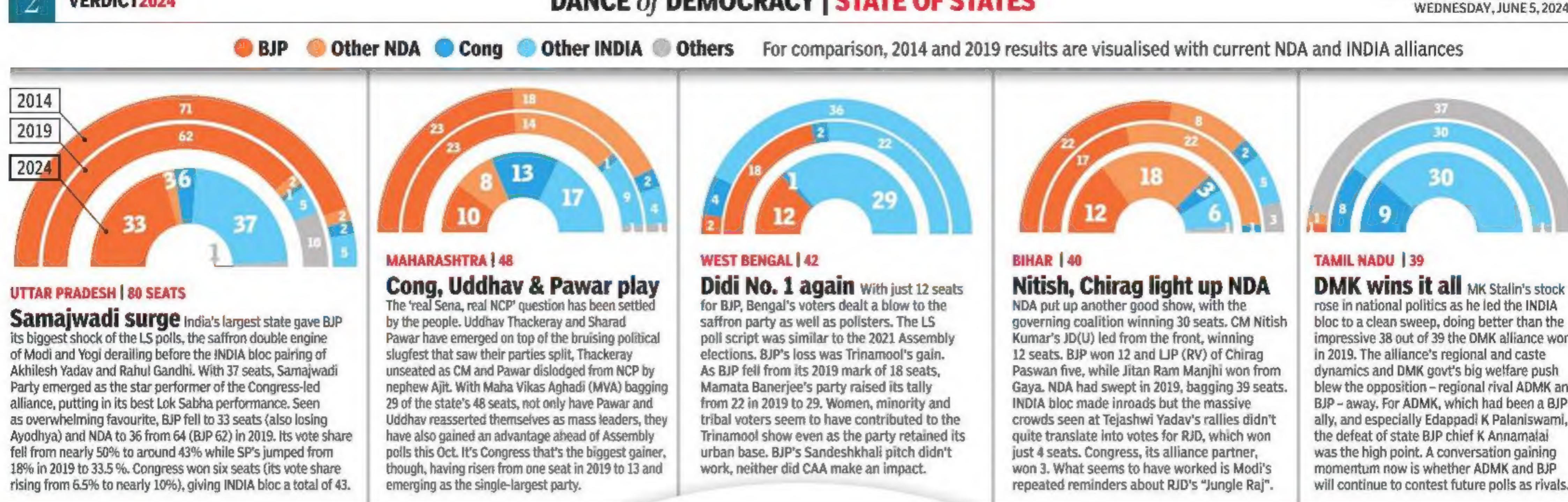
Fractured verdict Multi-cornered contests in all 13 seats of Punjab threw up a fractured verdict as governing party AAP upped its tally to 3, Congress won 7 seats. Congress and AAP were not in alliance here. Jailed pro-Khalistan Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh (Ind), won Khadoor Sahib by nearly 2 lakh votes, the state's highest margin. Sarabjit Singh, son of PM Indira Gandhi's assassin Beant Singh, won Faridkot by over 70,000 votes.

CHHATTISGARH | 11

Saffron sweep again BJP's Lok Sabha dominance in Chhattisgarh remains intact. In 2019, when Congress was flush from its assembly poll victory, BJP had bagged 9 seats. This time, it's done better with 10, a win that was significant to its national numbers. The result also puts first-time CM Vishnu Deo Sal, the first tribal to hold the position, on a stronger footing.

All results based on wins & leads at 11pm. Source: EC

DANCE of DEMOCRACY | STATE OF STATES



MAHARASHTRA | 48

Cong, Uddhav & Pawar play The real Sena, real NCP question has been settled by the people. Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar have emerged on top of the bruising political slugfest that saw their parties split. Thackeray unseated as CM and Pawar dislodged from NCP by nephew Ajit. With Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) bagging 29 of the state's 48 seats, not only have Pawar and Uddhav reassessed themselves as mass leaders, they have also gained an advantage ahead of Assembly polls this Oct. It's Congress that's the biggest gainer, though, having risen from one seat in 2019 to 13 and emerging as the single-largest party.

WEST BENGAL | 42

Didi No. 1 again With just 12 seats for BJP, Bengal's voters dealt a blow to the saffron party as well as pollsters. The LS poll script was similar to the 2021 Assembly elections. BJP's loss was Trinamool's gain. As BJP fell from its 2019 mark of 18 seats, Mamata Banerjee's party raised its tally from 22 in 2019 to 29. Women, minority and tribal voters seem to have contributed to the Trinamool show even as the party retained its urban base. BJP's Sandeshkhali pitch didn't work, neither did CAA make an impact.

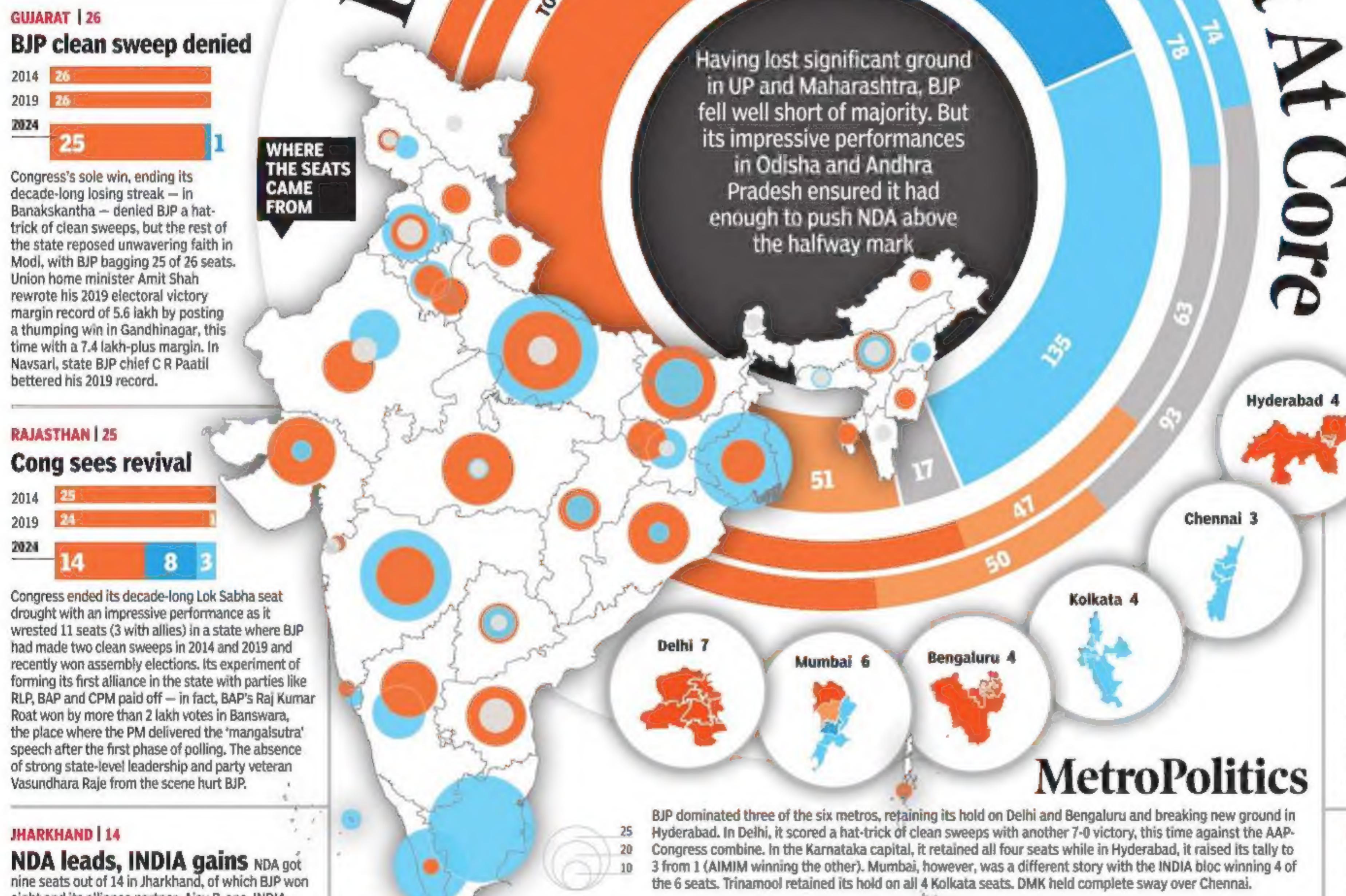
BIHAR | 40

Nitish, Chirag light up NDA NDA put up another good show, with the governing coalition winning 30 seats. CM Nitish Kumar's JD(U) led from the front, winning 12 seats. BJP won 12 and LJP (RV) of Chirag Paswan five, while Jitan Ram Manjhi won from Gaya. NDA had swept in 2019, bagging 39 seats. INDIA bloc made inroads but the massive crowds seen at Tejaswi Yadav's rallies didn't quite translate into votes for RJD, which won just 4 seats. Congress, its alliance partner, won 3. What seems to have worked is Modi's repeated reminders about RJD's "Jungle Raj".

TAMIL NADU | 39

DMK wins it all MK Stalin's stock rose in national politics as he led the INDIA bloc to a clean sweep, doing better than the impressive 38 out of 39 the DMK alliance won in 2019. The alliance's regional and caste dynamics and DMK govt's big welfare push blew the opposition — regional rival ADMK and BJP — away. For ADMK, which had been a BJP ally, and especially Edappadi K Palaniswami, the defeat of state BJP chief K Annamalai was the high point. A conversation gaining momentum now is whether ADMK and BJP will continue to contest future polls as rivals.

BJP Gains New Turf, But UPset At Core



Having lost significant ground in UP and Maharashtra, BJP fell well short of majority. But its impressive performances in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh ensured it had enough to push NDA above the halfway mark

Hyderabad 4



Chennai 3



Kolkata 4



MetroPolitics

BJP dominated three of the six metros, retaining its hold on Delhi and Bengaluru and breaking new ground in Hyderabad. In Delhi, it scored a hat-trick of clean sweeps with another 7-0 victory, this time against the AAP-Congress combine. In the Karnataka capital, it retained all four seats while in Hyderabad, it raised its tally to 3 from 1 (AIMIM winning the other). Mumbai, however, was a different story with the INDIA bloc winning 4 of the 6 seats. Trinamool retained its hold on all 4 Kolkata seats. DMK held complete sway over Chennai.

ODISHA | 21

Saffron wave washes away Naveen This was BJP's biggest victory outside its强holds of these general elections as the party decimated BJD to win 20 seats, up from just 8 in 2019. Naveen Patnaik's party, which has been governing for five consecutive terms and had won 12 seats in 2019, was wiped out with anti-incumbency finally catching up with the BJP chief, who has had a smooth run in the eastern state. Congress had another disappointing performance, ending up with just one seat.

TELANGANA | 17

It's a Cong-BJP match now For the first time since its formation in 2014, Congress and BJP have become the dominant political forces in Telangana, both sharing the spoils with eight seats each as BRSP was decimated and its vote share shifted in equal parts to the two national parties. From one seat (Secunderabad) in 2014 to four in 2019 and doubling it this time, BJP's growth here is impressive. The result strengthens CM A Revanth Reddy, who had said the LS polls were a referendum on Congress's five months in office in the state.

HARYANA | 10

Resentment shows In a Modi-versus-public battle in Haryana, BJP's reliance on the Modi magic did not pay off. Having won all 10 seats in 2019 with record votes, the saffron party managed to keep only 5 seats, that too with massively reduced margins. The campaign led by former CM Manohar Lal Khattar, replaced to beat anti-incumbency, faltered in the face of farmers' anger, resentment over unemployment, the Agnipath scheme and the old pension scheme.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR | 5

Valley surprise The first LS polls after the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of J&K into two UTs five years ago delivered unexpected results, with former CMs Omar Abdullah of NC and Mehbooba Mufti of PDP conceding defeat before counting concluded. The BJP stronghold was intact: Union minister Jitendra Singh, seeking a third straight term, won Udhampur while party colleague, MP Jugal Kishore, retained Jammu. In 2019, NC had secured all three seats in the Kashmir valley, while BJP won both Jammu seats.

NORTH-EAST STATES

Cong trips NDA In this bloc,

NDA's tally fell below that of 2019 by 3 seats, a sharp contrast to predictions of every exit poll. Individually, BJP lost four of the 17 seats it contested — 2 in Assam and one each in Manipur and Mizoram. NDA's tally fell from 18 in 2019 to 15. Congress surpassed its 2019 tally of 4, winning 7, including 3 in Assam. BJP's biggest dent was in conflict-hit Manipur, where it was rejected in the Meitei-dominated Imphal valley.

UNION TERRITORIES

	2014	2019	2024
Arunachal Pradesh	2	2	2
Manipur	2	2	2
Meghalaya	2	2	2
Triprapatna	2	2	2
Mizoram	1	1	1
Nagaland	1	1	1
Sikkim	1	1	1
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	1	1
Chandigarh	1	1	1
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	2	2	2
Ladakh	1	1	1
Lakshadweep	1	1	1
Puducherry	1	1	1

CHHATTISGARH | 11

Saffron sweep again BJP's Lok Sabha dominance in Chhattisgarh remains intact. In 2019, when Congress was flush from its assembly poll victory, BJP had bagged 9 seats. This time, it's done better with 10, a win that was significant to its national numbers. The result also puts first-time CM Vishnu Deo Sal, the first tribal to hold the position, on a stronger footing.

All results based on wins & leads at 11pm. Source: EC

ASSAM | 14

Holding their positions BJP has been on a winning spree here since the 2014 Lok Sabha polls but failed to improve on its 2019 performance, its tally stuck at 9. Its two allies, AGP and UPML, won a seat each, taking NDA's count to 11. Congress, too, maintained its 2019 tally of three, but it turned out to be a giant killer, with two seats coming at the expense of BJP and AIUDF.

UTTARAKHAND | 5

Juggernaut rolls on There were no surprises, with BJP clinching all five seats with comfortable margins for the third straight time. Former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat, contesting his first Lok Sabha election, won comfortably in Haridwar.

HIMACHAL PRADESH | 4

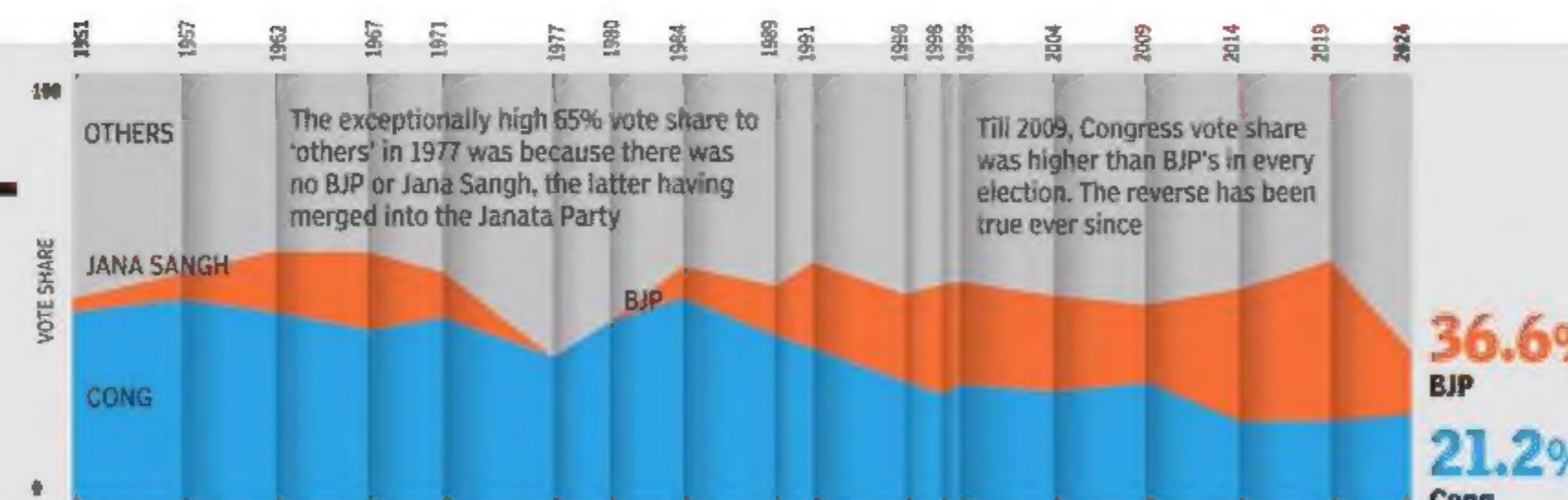
3 in a row for BJP The saffron party has now scored a hat-trick of clean sweeps in the state. Actor Kangana Ranaut emerged victorious in Mandi, defeating Congress legislator Vikramaditya Singh, a setback for Himachal PCC chief Pratibha Singh.

GOA | 2

Evenly split Distrust, disenchantment and anti-incumbency against BJP in a highly polarised atmosphere saw Congress' Viriato Fernandes defending South Goa by over 13,000 votes. BJP retained North Goa but it wasn't quite the breeze it expected the contest to be.

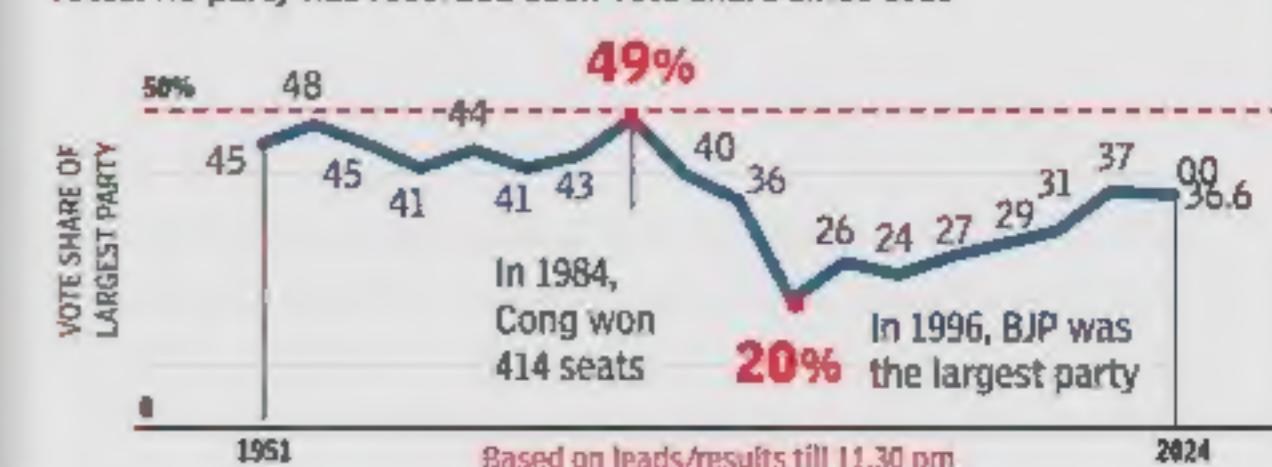
Cong's Loss Had Been BJP's Gain

BJP's vote share (Jana Sangh till 1971) didn't touch the 20% mark till 1991, the year when Congress's share fell below 40% for only the second time. By 2019, BJP was close to 40% and Congress had fallen below 20% for the first time ever.



No Party Has Ever Won 50% Of Votes

In 12 years between 1984 and 1996, vote share of the largest party in Lok Sabha fell by 29 percentage points — 49% to 20%. In the first nine parliamentary elections, the largest party secured a minimum of 40% votes. No party has recorded such vote share since 1989.



Behind The Numbers, Beyond The Headlines

What were voters saying, as they denied Modi's BJP majority, but still made it, by some distance, the single largest party? What was the message behind Rahul-powered Congress regaining its mojo? How can a govt running an economy that's growing at 8.2% suffer electoral reverses? TOI looks at the key takeaways from an election that had exit pollsters running for cover

NOTHING SHINES FOREVER, NOT EVEN BRAND MODI

Modi's campaign. He was BJP's campaign. And that was the problem. No political brand is immune to voter fatigue. Modi's wasn't either. BJP's rising vote share since 2014 was rightly attributed to Modi. The fall in its vote share must also mean Brand Modi has lost some lustre. Without doubt he's still a leader who commands substantial support. But, equally without doubt, that support wasn't enough to carry BJP beyond the finish line when voters had many questions for Modi. Sarkar Talking up growth rates when jobs are scarce, and prices pinch or talking up India's standing in world when rural incomes and consumption are under stress — Modi's key pitches were judged as out of whack with reality by many voters. The best demonstration of this came from UP. The state Modi made his political home gave BJP its biggest shock. Also, given that Modi's entire electoral record was built on delivering clear BJP majorities whenever he's on the ballot, his inability to take BJP past 272 will affect his brand post-results. Modi the Invincible can't apply if Modi runs a coalition govt, whose survival depends on merciful allies like Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu. Modi has seen a different kind of India. Will India see a different kind of Modi?

RAHUL TALKED THE WALK, MANY VOTERS LISTENED

Rahul Gandhi still refused to listen to party insiders who advised him to take a less combative stance. He doubled up on it and pushed many INDIA partners to join him in taking the attack to Modi. He stuck to a theme that emphasised bread-and-butter issues of ordinary voters. The two Bharat Jodo Yatras were built around these themes, and they were repeated by Rahul in rally after rally. He correctly divined that a substantial number of voters were a receptive audience for his message — even in Modi citadels like UP. It's largely to Rahul's credit that Congress is back as a player of note in the North, where BJP reigned supreme for 10 years. To be sure, Rahul has a long road to walk to reach a position where they can take BJP head on across the North. In MP and Chhattisgarh, for example, Rahul's message clearly didn't work as much it did in, say, UP. But a door has opened for Congress, and the party has its de facto leader to thank for it.

WHEN THERE'S NO WAVE, POLITICS GOES LOCAL

Hindsight. But this time, to observers on the ground, it was clear there was no Modi wave, not even in UP. When pan-national issues don't capture voter imagination, local concerns dominate voter thinking. Micro caste calculations come back into play. Livelihood concerns become paramount, candidate selection assumes huge



HINDUTVA PITCH DIDN'T WORK AS WELL AS HOPED FOR

importance — in short, politics reverts to the small things that affect voters, not an abstract big idea that fires them up.

WHO'S THE BOSS OF INDIA? KING CONG, OBVIOUSLY

When the INDIA alliance was formed, heavyweights like Mamata were sceptical of the idea that Congress can lead the opposition. The alliance had other big netas, Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray, Akhilesh Yadav, MK Stalin, all of whom looked at Congress not as the leader of the group, but as a party that had lost badly in two LS elections. But it was always true that for BJP to fall short of a majority, Congress had to do much better. So, the Grand Old Party was always the key player in INDIA. Now that Congress has nearly touched the three-figure mark in LS, with excellent performances in UP and Maharashtra, there's no question who leads INDIA. Opposition regional heavyweights now need Congress to lead future fights against BJP, in Parliament and in elections.

KINGMAKERS ARE BACK WITH A BANG

Coalition politics was for losers, was the mantra in 2014 and 2019. Coalitions are lifesavers, is the message from 2024. Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, both pre-poll alliance partners of BJP, are the reason a BJP-led govt can come to office. That, reportedly, both these politicians, who have been in every kind of alliance, got calls from both sides of the political divide tells us that the old story of Indian politics — parties with few seats can make or break a govt — is firmly back. Just like in 1996, 1998, 2004 and 2009, kingmakers will demand the king does them special favours. Just like in those years, the big party — BJP in this case — will have to carefully consider allies' views before taking certain kinds of policy decisions. And, in another repeat, kingmakers will play a crucial role when it comes to allocating portfolios.

HINDUTVA CAN'T ALWAYS WIN HINDUSTAN

The consecration of the Ram temple in January was supposed to be the icing on the Hindutva cake since 2014. That in UP, the

EVEN MODI'S BJP NEEDS THE SAANGH

in BJP's campaign. Bear in mind that UP is home to the mandir, Maharashtra hosts RSS HQ and Karnataka is BJP's biggest southern base. Why the Sangh behaved in this fashion remains unclear. But RSS staying aloof seems to have made a difference to BJP's final performance. Significantly, BJP president JP Nadda had said during an interview, when asked about his party's relationship with RSS, that BJP, having grown up as an organisation, doesn't need RSS as a crucial support system. Not quite true, perhaps.

PICK YOUR FRIENDS BY ASSESSING YOUR ENEMY

units that, respectively, wanted no alliance with BJD and wanted a tie-up with TDP, not YSRCP. Those calls paid rich

REPORTS FROM KEY STATES LIKE UP, MAHARASHTRA, KARNATAKA WERE NOT ENTHUSIASTICALLY PARTICIPATING

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Both NDA AND INDIA PLAYED THIS SMART. BJP BIGSHOTS LISTENED TO THEIR ODIsha AND ANDHRA LOCAL

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AGNEEVER TRIPPED UP NOT JUST MANY YOUNG ASPIRANTS BUT ALSO PROVED A HURDLE FOR BJP IN HARYANA, PUNJAB

DON'T TALK ABOUT TINKERING WITH THE CONSTITUTION

Sometime after campaigning began in earnest, BJP took to reassuring voters it had no plans to change the Constitution, no plans to tinker with reservations. It was forced into this by a successful opposition campaign, which took advantage of some BJP netas' statement that 400-paar will give the party a chance to refashion the Constitution. That INDIA campaign, centered around the theme that BJP wanted to take away SC/ST reservations, clearly worked, as results especially in UP show. BJP's carefully built social coalition in the state splintered because a sizeable number of Dalits took the 'threat' to quotas seriously. BJP tried to change the game by talking about Congress's 'plans' to take away SC/OBC quotas for Muslims. But it didn't work.

IT'S THE ECONOMY, EVEN WHEN GDP IS ON A HIGH

In a country with steep income and wealth inequality, a fast-growing economy must create enough decent jobs for most citizens. That this wasn't happening was clear even from govt data, which showed self-employment and unpaid housework were two big chunks of total employment. Almost every ground report from constituencies, especially in big states like UP and Maharashtra, captured the angst of the jobless young. In Haryana and Punjab, the jobs question was sharpened by BJP govt's introduction of 4-year stints for army jawans. Agneevre is one 'reform' that cost BJP dearly. Add to all this a rural economy that had to support, post-pandemic, more people who couldn't find jobs in factories and cities, as well as a general complaint about inflation. You then have the perfect storm of dissatisfaction.

FREEBIES ARE NOT A FREE PASS IN ELECTIONS

BJP had its free foodgrain scheme, Congress promised to top it. Jagan Reddy promised the moon, so did some others — but there's no evidence that welfare schemes and/or freebies decisively impacted results anywhere this time. It's not that low-income voters don't like schemes and free stuff; it's just that once assured of delivery, more of the same gives diminishing political returns to parties. A party without promises like these would surely suffer. But when every party promises variations of the same, no one party gains substantially.

POLITICAL WASHING MACHINES DON'T ALWAYS SELL

BJP made great play of the fact that numerous opposition leaders were under corruption investigations. Two problems. One, many voters thought investigative agencies were being used in a partisan fashion by BJP's govt. Second, voters also noticed that BJP, for all its talk on being a staunch enemy of corruption, had no problem



CONSTITUTION BECAME KEY TO CONG NARRATIVE

welcoming politicians whose CVs were dominated by graft charges. That many defectors to BJP failed to win their seats is one indication that BJP's anti-corruption rhetoric didn't convince enough voters in states where they lost out most. Maharashtra and Bengal results best exemplified this.

DON'T MAKE BIG PLANS BEFORE YOU KNOW THE RESULTS

BJP heavyweights made big statements about what their govt would do and one nation/one poll were the two big items on a future agenda. With BJP short of a majority and the opposition charged up, it can be safely assumed neither is happening anytime soon. Even for legally mandated delimitation, BJP will find the going difficult. One ally, Nitish in populous Bihar, would want it. Another ally, Naidu, from the South, wouldn't want it.

WHATAPP ELECTION TO YOUTUBE ELECTION

Social media, of course, played a big role in every party's campaign. But it wasn't hundreds of campaign messages in their phones that voters were hooked on. It was hundreds of videos. YouTubers, some of them with a backup team, some lone rangers, some for BJP, and, crucially, some for opposition, were the big hit in these polls. BJP's overwhelming presence on news TV, which went live almost every time the party's brass was holding a rally, was countered by anti-BJP YouTubers.

EXIT POLLSTERS HEAD FOR THE EXIT

Almost every exit poll run by news TV channels gave BJP a majority bigger than 2019's and NDA a larger number of seats. Axis My India, on India Today, predicted 401 seats for NDA as the outer limit. That is, Pradeep Gupta, broke down on live television said it all about what actual results did to the credibility of pollsters. Pseudologists can get it wrong, of course. But when so many exit polls get it so spectacularly wrong, serious questions about methodology are bound to come up. News TV channels who ran these exit polls perhaps should do their own introspection.

This Time, Congress Did Better In Straight Fights Against BJP

How did the BJP fare when its main opponent was Congress? And how did it do when other parties (in the India alliance or out of it) were the primary rivals? We looked at seats where BJP finished winner or runner-up to answer those questions. This does not include seats where BJP ended up third or worse. For instance, in Kerala, BJP may have contested most seats but the main contest was between UDF and LDF except in a couple of cases. This time, Congress made a sharp recovery, securing a win percentage of close to 30% against BJP in straight fights

BJP VS CONGRESS

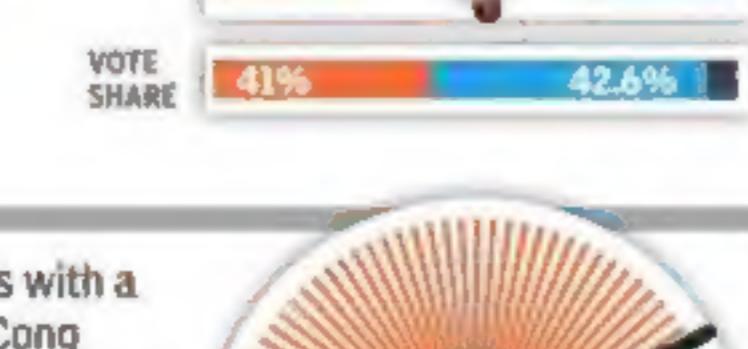
In 2009, there were 173 seats where Cong and BJP were top two contestants. BJP won 80 seats to Cong's 93

46.2%



Of 189 seats with a direct BJP-Cong face-off, BJP got 166

87.8%



Of the 190 such contests last time, BJP won 175 seats

92.1%



This time, there were 215 seats where BJP, Cong were the top two contestants. BJP won 153 seats

71.2%



BJP VS OTHER PARTIES

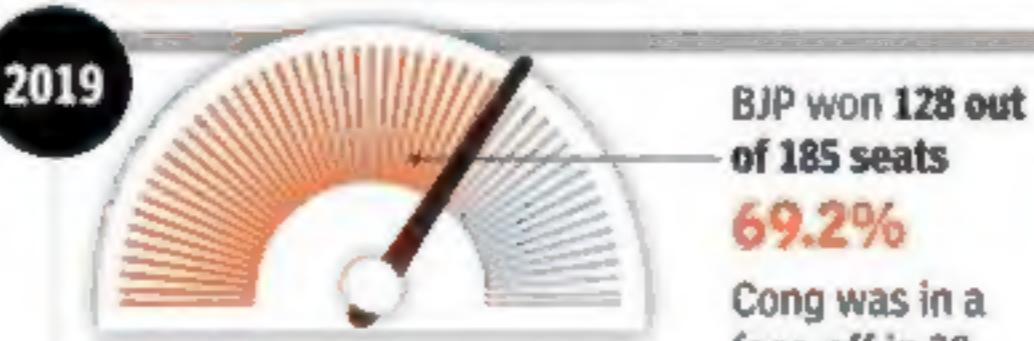
53 seats saw a direct contest between BJP and other parties. BJP won 36 and lost 17

67.9%



Total seats: 147
BJP won 116

78.9%



BJP won 128 out of 185 seats

69.2%



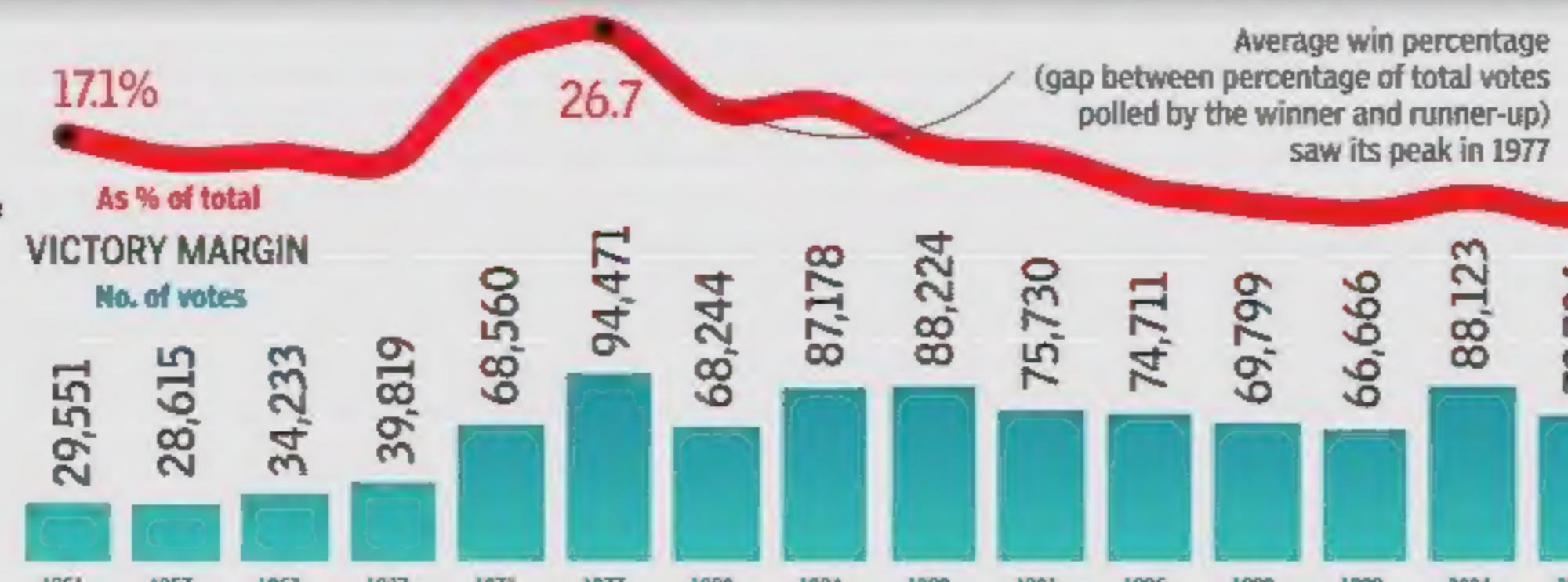
Cong was in a face-off in 38 seats against Others. It won 37

51.1%



Why 1977 & 2019 LS Polls Stand Out

Victory margins needn't be big in a first-past-the-post system. But the picture can change in case of a wave. Average win margins are a barometer of the political mood in the country. They shot up in 1977, when there was an overwhelming mandate against Emergency, and breached 1.5 lakh in the Modi wave election of 2014. They peaked at nearly 2 lakh in 2019, when Modi won a second term



Average win percentage (gap between percentage of total votes polled by the winner and runner-up) saw its peak in 1977



MIND THE GAP: The average win margin in each seat underlines how narrow or wide Lok Sabha victories are. In 2019, when there were about 11 lakh votes cast on average in each seat, the mean difference between the winner and the second-best was 17% of votes

RIDING THEIR LAKH: Amid mostly bipolar contests between the NDA and INDIA alliances, the average margin in 2024 LS polls touched 1.6 lakh but the average per cent margin dipped from 2019

How small drop in BJP vote share led to big dent in tally

TEAM TOI

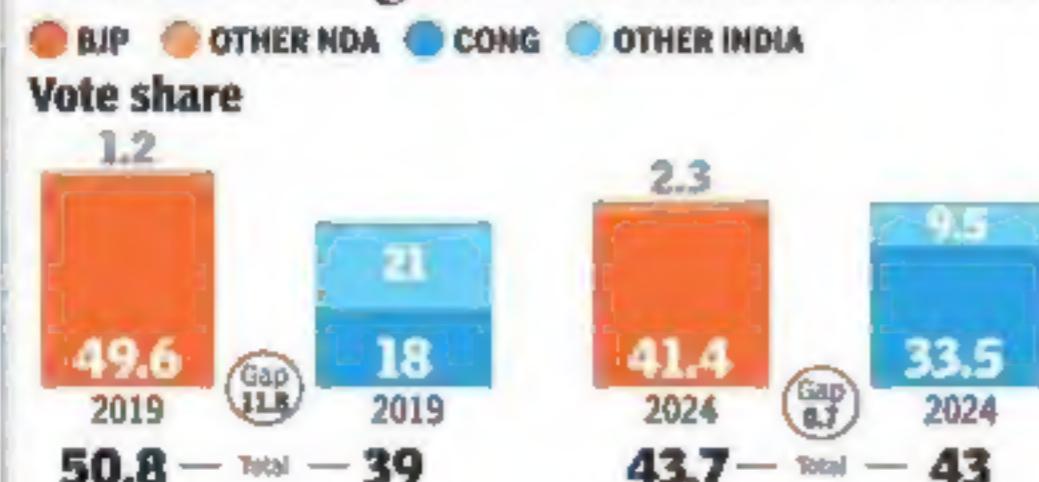
BJP saw its national vote share fall marginally from 37.3% in 2019 to 36.6% in 2024, but its seat tally dropped by 63 from 303 to 240, putting it well below the halfway mark. In contrast, Congress raised its vote share a bit from 19.5% last time to 21.2%, but that was enough to nearly double its seat tally from 62 to 99.

How could such minor changes in vote share have caused such a large variation in seat tallies? That's because the national vote share is an aggregation of states, and a party may gain vote share in a state where it is starting from such a low base that adding votes doesn't translate into winning seats while losing the same amount in a highly competitive state could cost many seats.

That is precisely what happened to BJP this time. For instance, its vote share in Tamil Nadu rose from 3.6% in 2019 to 11.2% this time, but that added nothing to its seat tally. Similarly, it went from 9.6% to 18.6% in Punjab, but in the absence of any alliance, that was not enough to win any seats, so it ended up losing the two it had.

On the other hand, a drop of about three percentage points in Bihar, from 23.6% to 20.5%, cost it five seats, while a drop of a mere 1.6 percentage points in West Bengal meant it dropped six seats.

What Changed The Game In UP...



...and in Maharashtra



The most dramatic instance, however, was in Maharashtra, where BJP's share dropped by just 1.4 percentage points from 27.6% to 26.2%, but that led to its winning less than half the seats it had last time (10 versus 23).

Congress presented almost a mirror image of this. In Maharashtra, a rise in vote share of less than one percentage point, from 16.3% to 17.1%, saw its seat tally jump from one to 13. In Rajasthan, it upped its vote share from 34.2% to 37.9%, and that meant winning eight seats instead of none. In UP, a rise in vote

Where contests were direct, victory margins were the narrowest

TEAM TOI

The average margin of victory in 2024 Lok Sabha polls was about 1.6 lakh votes, but that varied significantly across states. Not surprisingly, those that were dominated by a single party or alliance saw the highest average margins while states that saw two alliances or parties going toe to toe had significantly narrower margins of victory on average.

The highest average margin among states with five or more seats was in Madhya Pradesh, where BJP made a clean sweep, at about 3.4 lakh. This was followed by Gujarat, another state with a near total saffron sweep (almost 2.8 lakh) and Uttarakhand (2.3 lakh).

On the flip side, Tamil Nadu, which saw a clean sweep by the DMK-led alliance, also had margins averaging 2.2 lakh. At the other end of the spectrum, Punjab had an average margin of just about 70,500. In UP, which saw a fierce battle between NDA and INDIA alliances, margins were on average under a lakh while Bihar and Maharashtra too were just over a lakh. Odisha was an interesting



CLOSE CALL: Ravindra Waikar, outlier. While the seat tally would indicate that it was a one-way street with BJP winning 20 of the 21 seats, the average margin was a little over a lakh, on the lower side among the larger states, suggesting that the contests were closer than the seat tallies would make us believe.

The highest margin was in Dhubri in Assam, where Rakibul Hussain of the Congress polled nearly 14.7 lakh votes and beat Mohammed Badruddin Ajmal of the AIUDF by over 10 lakh votes, a new record. The lowest margin of a mere 48 votes was in Mumbai North West where a battle between the two Sena factions saw the Shinde group's candidate Ravindra Waikar just pip the UBT group's Amol Kirtikar at the post.

Meanwhile, DMK in Tamil Nadu emphasised social justice and countered BJP's Hindutva narrative, framing the contest as a battle between caste and communalism. In Bihar, despite BJP's alliance with JD(U), which focuses on

Mandal momentum shakes up Hindutva juggernaut

Subodh.Ghildiyal
@timesgroup.com

Lok Sabha elections saw a decisive win for a caste-focused coalition in UP, reshaping the political landscape. This shift from religious to caste-based campaigning highlighted a significant change in voter priorities. The opposition alliance, led by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, ran on a platform of caste census and constitutional protections, appealing primarily to Dalits and OBCs. In contrast, PM Modi's campaign centred around religious themes.

The SP-Congress coalition's win is part of a broader national trend. In Maharashtra, Congress, along with NCP and Shiv Sena, capitalised on Maratha stir and rural distress among OBCs, moving away from traditional leadership by appointing Nana Patole as party chief.

Meanwhile, DMK in Tamil Nadu emphasised social justice and countered BJP's Hindutva narrative, framing the contest as a battle between caste and communalism. In Bihar, despite BJP's alliance with JD(U), which focuses on



DUO CASTE WIDER NET

caste politics, the RJD-Congress's OBC-centric approach proved formidable. The JMM-Congress opposition also held its ground in Jharkhand by appealing to tribals and backward communities.

UP, however, remained the epicentre of the classic 'Mandal vs Kamandal' struggle, reminiscent of the late 1980s when Mandal politics and the Rath Yatra brought leaders like Kalyan Singh and Mulayam Singh Yadav to the forefront. BJP's dominance, propelled by Modi's hardline Hindutva since 2014, had previously eclipsed both SP and BSP. BJP's strategy combined religious appeal with targeted outreach to non-Yadav OBCs, undermining SP's sup-

port base and taking advantage of BSP's decline.

After a decade of BJP's reign, Akhilesh revitalised his father Mulayam Singh Yadav's Mandalite approach, presenting himself as a youth leader advocating for backward classes, Dalits, and minorities. Congress supported this strategy, promoting a caste census and challenging the 50% quota ceiling. INDIA bloc framed the election as a fight to protect Ambedkar's Constitution, appealing to floating BSP voters. Modi responded with a vigorous campaign, accusing the opposition of intending to divert SC/ST/OBC quotas to Muslims. Despite these efforts, the elections mirrored the 1989 scenario, with caste politics again taking centre stage.

Over the years, many predicted the demise of caste-based politics in favour of economic and religious divisions. BJP was often seen as transcending caste dynamics through its religious appeal. However, these predictions underestimated the enduring significance of caste identities and their potential to reassert themselves within the political landscape.

North Gives BJP The Blues, South Sees Saffron Hues

HINDI BELT 10 states 225 seats

UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana, HP, Uttarakhand, Delhi

THE SOUTH 5 states 132 seats

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Andaman

A drastic drop for BJP in UP peppered the Hindi heartland – the party's bulwark since 2014 – with flocks of opposition colours though BJP did sweep MP again and won over half the seats in Rajasthan

	SEATS WON	VOTE SHARE
BJP	127	43.5%
BJP+	20	4.7%
Cong	25	21.6%
Cong+	48	18.4%

	SEATS WON	VOTE SHARE
BJP	30	23.9%
BJP+	20	10.6%
Cong	42	24.8%
Cong+	30	13.9%

BJP doubled its tally in Telangana and, with three seats in Andhra and a historic first win in Kerala, found South to be more accommodative this time. But it ceded ground to Congress in Karnataka and failed to make a mark in Tamil Nadu

OTHER 186 SEATS: From Manipur to Maharashtra, BJP's footprint shrank in states where the party and its allies virtually had saturation pickings in 2019. The opposition stole a march on BJP in Maharashtra and Congress clawed its way back in the North-East

No farewell to welfare: BJP may loosen purse strings

TEAM TOI

For years, PM Modi has taken a stand against rewards. Even in the run-up to polls, 'Modi ki Guarantee', BJP's manifesto, stayed clear of promises of assured pension for govt staff or restoration of rail concessions for seniors. This contrasted with Congress's moves to announce annual doles of Rs 1 lakh for women and education and farm loan waivers.

The single biggest indicator of the absence of enough job openings is the increase in the number of people classified as self-employed. In India, the high proportion of self-employed is an indicator of the weak link between GDP growth and the creation of formal jobs.

The number of self-employed people in every 100 Indians in the workforce increased between 2020 and 2021. In 2022-23, not only were 57.3% of people self-employed, but about 18.3% of them were unpaid workers in household enterprises. The number has grown at work but without pay since the pandemic, showing that a sizable number of people did not gain from the GDP growth. Not just that, almost 46 of every 100 Indians working in 2022-23 were in agriculture, a level that was higher than the year before Covid.

The absence of openings meant many who returned home to villages during lockdowns couldn't return. Agriculture is the lowest-paying and most precarious sector.

A look at swathes of India where BJP lost seats, eastern UP, north Karnataka, and east Maharashtra, all poorer parts of their states, indicates that the GDP trajectory bypassed many. With stagnant incomes, the impact of inflation was aggravated even if it was not high by historical standards.

Ahead of polls, Modi govt focused on filling up vacancies in govt. That's something that is expected to get a fillip given that jobs have been a key poll issue. The Union Budget, which is expected in mid-July, will lay out the roadmap.

State Of Giving

Some key schemes that Centre & states are offering

WHAT CENTRE GIVES

Free foodgrains for 81 cr BPL beneficiaries

Ayushman Bharat, health insurance scheme for poor

Free gas connections, subsidised cylinders under PM Ujjwala

PM-Kisan: ₹6,000 cash transfer to farmers

Concessional loans for tiny businesses (Mudra), street vendors (PM-Svanidhi)

PYUJAWALA: ₹1,250/mth to 1.3cr women

PM-Kisan: ₹6,000 cash transfer to farmers

POWER: ₹300/mth units free

KUTAKA: ₹200 units free

ANDHRA: ₹Free for agriculture

TGANA: ₹200 units free

UP: ₹Free for tubewells

DELHI: ₹200 units free, 50% subsidy for 201 - 400 units

FOOD: ₹5kg rice for BPL cardholders

KUTAKA: ₹Cash for 5kg rice for BPL cardholders

TN: ₹Free breakfast for Class I-V govt school students

DELHI: ₹20,000 litres of free water per month for households

Minority community plays major role in SP & Trinamool seat surge

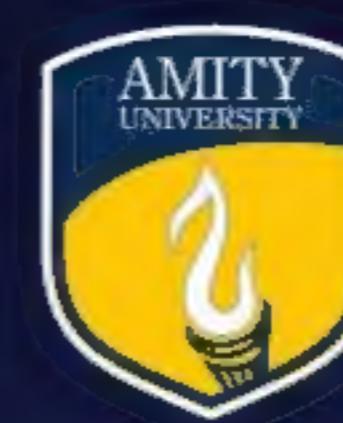
TEAM TOI

A significant portion of the INDIA bloc's success rests on Muslims, who voted decisively against BJP and formed a coalition with backward castes and Dalits. This restricted BJP from getting a clear majority while giving Samajwadi Party in UP and TMC in West Bengal a clear advantage.

Academics say that this is due to the combination of BJP's failed outreach towards the Pashandas (the most socially and economically backward among Muslims) and a pushback to the anti-Muslim rhetoric during the election campaign. However, the most significant factor that enabled the backward Muslim combine was BJP's announcement that Muslim reservation within the OBC quota would be removed.

While the BJP campaign kickstarted with 'Viskit Bharat', an agenda for development, the discourse deteriorated soon after the first phase. Referring to PM Modi's Pashanda outreach as "doublespeak", Prof Khalid Anis Ansari, a sociologist with Azim Premji University, said, "In one speech, he would speak about Pashandas and then call Muslims infiltrators in another speech."

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- Mass Communication
- Mathematics
- Microbial Science
- Molecular Chemistry
- Molecular Medicine & Stem Cell Research and Cancer Biology
- Nanomedicine
- Nanotechnology
- Neuropsychology & Neurosciences
- Nuclear Science & Technology
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- Occupational Therapy
- Performing Arts
- Pharmacy
- Philosophy, Political Sc. & Economics
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- Physics
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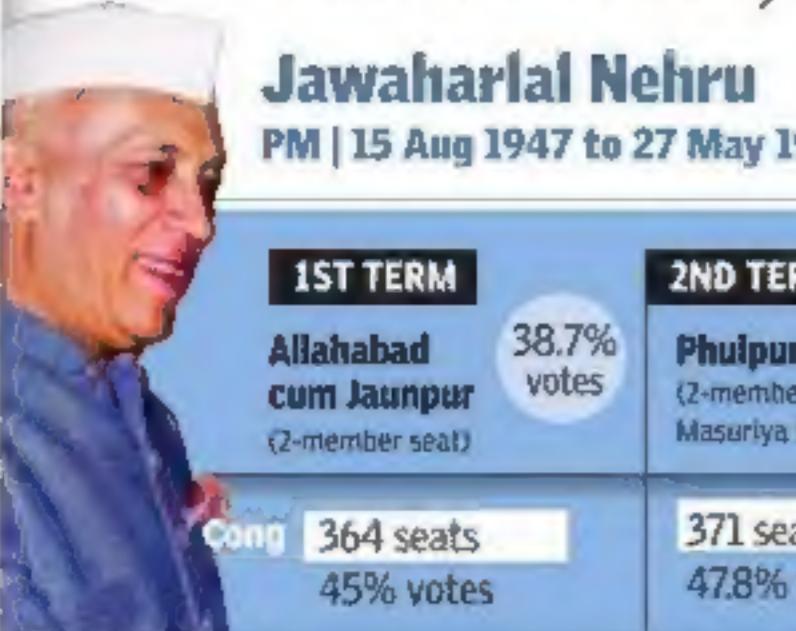


PRESENTS
**FEATURE
FROM
FUTURE**



**SCAN
HERE TO GET AN
EXCLUSIVE
SNEAK PEEK**

60 Years Later, Another Triple



Jawaharlal Nehru
PM | 15 Aug 1947 to 27 May 1964

Narendra Modi
PM | Since 26 May 2014

1ST TERM
Allahabad cum Jaunpur (2-member seat)
38.7% votes

2ND TERM
Phulpur (2-member seat Cong's Masuriya Dist second again)
36.9% votes

3RD TERM
Phulpur (1 member seat)
61.6% votes

1ST TERM IN LS
Vidarbha 72.8% Varanasi 56.4%
BJP 282 seats 31.3% votes

2ND TERM
Varanasi 63.6% Varanasi 54.2%
303 seats 37.7% votes

3RD TERM
Varanasi 240 seats 36.6% votes

6

Despite a far tighter election than expected, Modi is set to head a govt for the third time. What's different this time for the former three-time Gujarat chief minister is managing mercurial allies, and a belligerent opposition in Parliament

3-time CM

LONGEST-SERVING HEADS OF ELECTED GOVT	
Narendra Modi	8,277 days
Jawaharlal Nehru	6,130
Indira Gandhi	5,829
Manmohan Singh	3,656
Morarji Desai	2,511
AB Vajpayee	2,272
Narasimha Rao	2,229
Rajiv Gandhi	1,857

Number of days served as Prime Minister as well as chief minister

As on June 4

Man With Modified Mandate

In a waveless election, 400-paar proved to be an unrealistic target. But while the Teesri Manzil has many challenges ahead such as fickle allies, Modi is no stranger to pressure

Team TOI

In their post-results comments, opposition leaders — from Rahul Gandhi to Mamata Banerjee — described BJP's failure to score a majority of its own as PM Narendra Modi's defeat. This was to be expected, considering that the entire NDA's campaign (TDP being a partial exception), was framed around him. His energetic campaign only served to enhance his personal liability. But while results clearly suggest that the law of politics has caught up with him, he has still pulled off a feat which most incumbents in democracy can only dream of.

Modi is going to be only the second PM after Jawaharlal Nehru to have secured a third term. In fact, his achievement may be considered even bigger because it comes in a political milieu that is polarised, fragmented and far more competitive than the one Nehru had to reckon with. Moreover, Nehru also had the advantage of having been blessed by none other than Mahatma Gandhi, and being leader of a party that basked in the glow of being the vanguard of the freedom movement. In contrast, Modi arrived as dissent; a challenger to the mainstream.

Coming back to 2024, while the tally of 243 looks like a nosedive both from the standards of the 400-paar campaign as well as the widely held perception of the polls being a no-contest, this is the best to have been posted by any non-BJP party since 1984 when Congress rode the massive sympathy wave generated by Indira Gandhi's assassination.

However, the setback has brought to fore issues like price rise and unemployment which emerged as warning signs during the campaign but were seen as minor irritants because of the as-



Modi has negotiated several obstacles in the past. And despite the apparent diminution, he will be tackling another term with strengths few others can boast of

sumption, wrong and smug as it turned out to be, that an absolute majority was already in the bag. Although Modi did a good job of containing inflation, the assumption that voters would go only by the sincerity of intent, while also taking into account the international pattern of runaway inflation, turned out to be wrong.

Modi pushed for expansion of public infrastructure and generation of employment in the informal sector. The calculation that this, along with the post-Covid push for filling up vacancies in central govt jobs, would help assuage the concern about jobs did not come to be wrong.

The retention of sitting BJP MPs, despite internal surveys and

cadre feedback flagging their unpopularity, was another big and avoidable mistake.

The 400+ target, which was supposed to convey strength and self-

assuredness, also boomeranged, with the opposition saying this was part of a design to change the Constitution and scrap quotas.

The counter-maneuvre by Modi in the form of an aggressive pitch against Muslim quota did not work as Hindus voted along caste lines. If anything, it gave an opening to his opponents to renew the charge that he was divisive and desperate. This may have caused consternation to the moderates among his supporters.

The resultant reduction in seats has turned the third term into a challenge. Apart from a stronger opposition which is going to be more aggressive, Modi also has to contend with allies like N Chan-

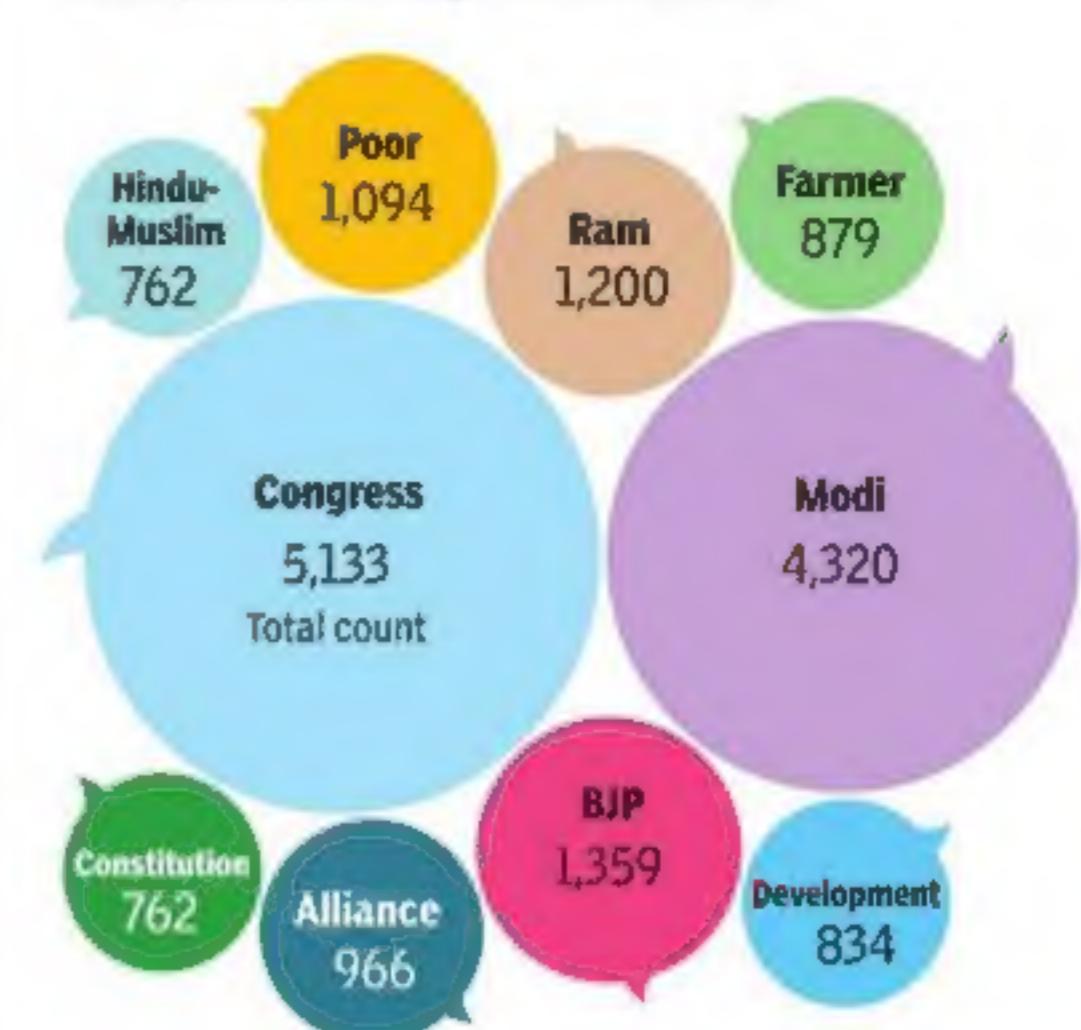
drababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, who are not in sync with the themes on BJP's agenda and may act as restraint. At the same time, RSS will also be keeping a wary eye on how he deals with pressure from allies.

But Modi is not a stranger to struggles. His career is essentially that of negotiating challenges and taking them on at the opportune moment. And, despite the apparent diminution, he will be approaching one with strengths that few can boast of. BJP's numbers, although reduced, are also a testimony to the goodwill and credibility he enjoys in an age when loyalties are short-lived and fleeting, and goodwill evaporates in the heat of ever-escalating expectations. This is the main reason why BJP could survive the 'caste' and 'consolidation' card played so adroitly by the opposition. His credentials as a 'staunch nationalist' are considered beyond reproach, and the massive upgrade of public infrastructure that happened under his leadership is a lived and real experience that may be appreciated again now that resentments have been vented. The robust exchequer is going to be a strength. Addressing the concerns of Dalits and OBCs cannot be beyond a leader and a party which has been more sensitive to caste sentiments than the older BJP.

The third term is going to be his legacy term, and Modi will leave no stone unturned to ensure it is remembered for accomplishments rather than as a weak arrangement. Going by his track record, he may not like to let the challenges become an alibi for non-performance, and a stint which dashes the memory of his achievements in the first two terms. Conclusions about decline may yet turn out to be premature.

Pollspeak: Top 10 Words

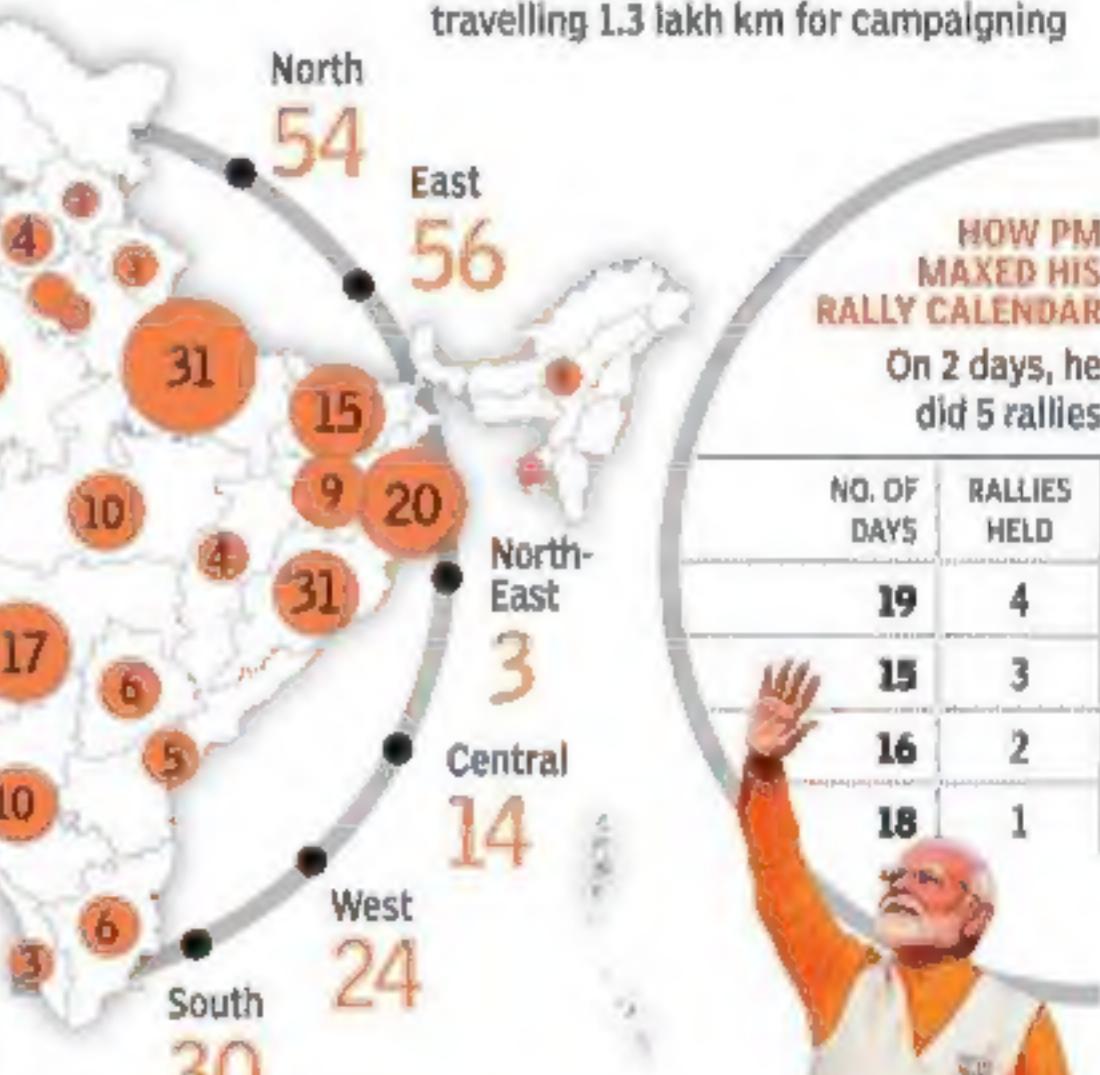
An analysis of Modi's campaign speeches (from Mar 16 to May 30) reveal some powerful patterns that drove his message home to voters



181 180

NO. OF CONSTITUENCIES COVERED

Varanasi is the only constituency where Modi had both a rally and a roadshow. In 2019, he had attended 142 rallies, travelling 1.3 lakh km for campaigning



Some of the world's longest-serving leaders

Having won a third term, Modi joins the club of leaders who have served the lengthiest stints in office*

Not so 'Upayogi'? Results reversal comes as reality check for UP CM

Team TOI



TARNISHED HALO? Though he had little say in candidate selection, the lack of trust of minorities in his govt played a role in the loss

The setback that BJP has received in UP, has come as a stunning reality check for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The Yogi factor — a combination of strong law and order, development and aggressive Hindutva — which was a strong pitch used by BJP in addition to the Modi factor appeared to find resonance on the ground during the campaign. But the 'double engine' faltered this time around and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's catchphrase 'PDA' targeting Picchade (backwards), Dalits and Alpsankhyak (minorities) had a deeper connect with voters, especially Dalits and backwards.

Yogi has spearheaded BJP's consecutive victories in five back-to-back elections in the state — 2017 and 2022 state polls, 2019 Lok Sabha elections and two local body polls before the reversal of the trend. "Since Yogi had been credited with the wins, he will have to take the responsibility for the dismal show also," says a political observer, adding "but he cannot be made a scapegoat."

The selection of candidates was done ignoring anti-incumbency and brewing resentment against them and has emerged as one of the main reasons for the loss. A party insider said that Yogi stands clear as the candidate selection responsibility rested with the central leadership.

"Yogi is seen as a saviour for BJP. He had no say in the selection of candidates. Those who won despite the brewing anger against them will definitely credit Yogi's contribution along with the Modi factor when they introspect the reasons for their success," he added.

In every election rally that he addressed in UP this time, PM Narendra Modi not only praised the Yogi model of law and order that prepared a conducive atmosphere for investment in the state, but also highlighted his developmental initiatives.

In his quest to get improved numbers, he knows which is the most crucial "engine" he could have banked on. "However, this 'double engine' narrative failed to attract voters in the state. This could be because it is a much-flogged slogan and Yogi has reached the halfway mark of the second term of his govt," says another analyst.

Since Yogi had been credited with earlier victories, he will have to take responsibility for the dismal show. But he cannot be made a scapegoat either

However, the narrative set by Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in the middle of the campaign is back in discussion. While addressing rallies, Kejriwal claimed that after BJP's win, Yogi will be removed like several other BJP CMs. According to UP watchers, the Delhi CM tried to create a false narrative that all was not well within the BJP and the top leadership was wary of Yogi because of his growing popularity and it might have impacted a section of voters.

"Although he was playing on Yo-

gi's popularity, giving a message to the latter's admirers and voters that if you vote for the saffron party, your 'favourite' CM would be dispensed with, BJP came out with a rebuttal. However, with BJP losing ground in these polls, this narrative is bound to return to haunt the party," says a BJP insider.

His name also came up during discussions around Thakur protests during the election. The hype around the protest likely affected the party's prospects, especially in the first two rounds. "But he was not alone. UP BJP's inability to assess the intensity of the protest will also be discussed in the same breath," the analyst says and adds it was because of Yogi that the extent of damage was curtailed. Seats won by BJP do reflect the same. The extent could be a matter of debate.

While Yogi is in the third year of his second tenure and his welfare measures have reached the last strata of the society, his govt is yet to earn the trust of the minority community, as apparent from the voting pattern. "This would be a task cut out for his govt to bridge that gap," says a political analyst.

However, while making the governance more robust, the Yogi govt must be wary of its image as being "over-dependent" on bureaucracy. Ignoring party workers and people's representatives was a reason quoted for the lack of enthusiasm among party cadre," he adds.

Himanta: Will N-E star campaigner lose sheen?

Prabin Kalita@timesgroup.com

Lok Sabha election results present a complex picture for Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam chief minister and key architect of BJP's vision in the North-East.

Despite his significant role in BJP's national campaigns, the party's and NDA's performance in the North-East, especially in Manipur, raise questions about his future trajectory. In his home state of Assam, the party retained the same tally as 2019 but failed to improve its performance.

While Sarma wasn't directly involved in campaigning in the North-East, except Assam, the region's electoral outcomes now raise questions about his ability to deliver in his own backyard.

BJP's decision to deploy Sarma outside the region, leaving the regional leadership to manage their own campaigns, can be interpreted as a strategic move to utilise his skills on a national platform, potentially grooming him for a larger role within the party. Conversely, it could also suggest a deliberate distancing from the complexities of the North-East, especially given the sensitive political climate and BJP's mixed record in the region.

This can be a crucial juncture in Sarma's political future. While his national profile within BJP has undoubtedly risen, the party's setbacks, especially in Manipur, might lead to a reassessment of his influence and standing within the party. Whether the central leadership continues to repose the same level of trust in him, and how they choose to utilize his political capital in the future, remains to be seen.

Sarma's political journey started with the Congress party. However, he lost his first assembly election in 1996. But that did not obstruct his

FUTURE TENSE?
Setbacks in his backyard raise questions

quick rise through the ranks, holding important ministerial portfolios in the Assam government. Recognising the shifting political winds, he made a decisive move to the BJP in 2013, a decision that proved instrumental in the party's historic victory in the following year.

In the run-up to the 2016 Assam assembly elections, Sarma proved his mettle as BJP's most dependable backroom strategist. His deft maneuvering facilitated the defection of nine Congress MLAs to BJP, providing a significant boost to the party's prospects. This strategic move paid dividends, as BJP tasted its first electoral victory in Assam, a state long considered a Congress bastion.

Recognising Sarma's contributions, then BJP president Amit Shah entrusted him with the pivotal role of convenor of the newly formed North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA). This miniature version of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) brought together almost all the regional parties of the North-East under a unified umbrella, solidifying the BJP's footprint in the region.

Sarma's strategic prowess continued to bear fruit as BJP secured the defection of 42 Congress MLAs in Arunachal Pradesh, paving way for formation of the party's government in the state. This remarkable feat was followed by BJP's first government in Manipur and historic ousting of the formidable Left Front in Tripura, a state where they had sway for decades.

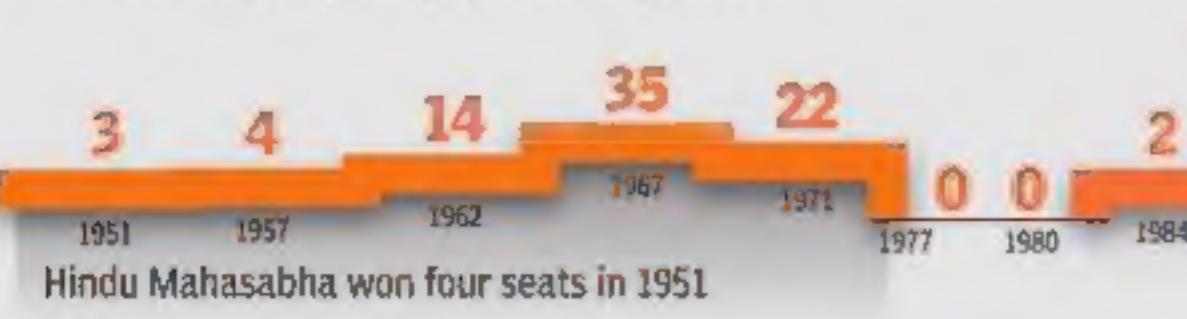
A wave of political change swept across North-East, with Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram also witnessing the formation of NEDA / NDA governments. However, now there are new twists to this success story.



"Leaders from 20th century and from democracies with free and fair elections

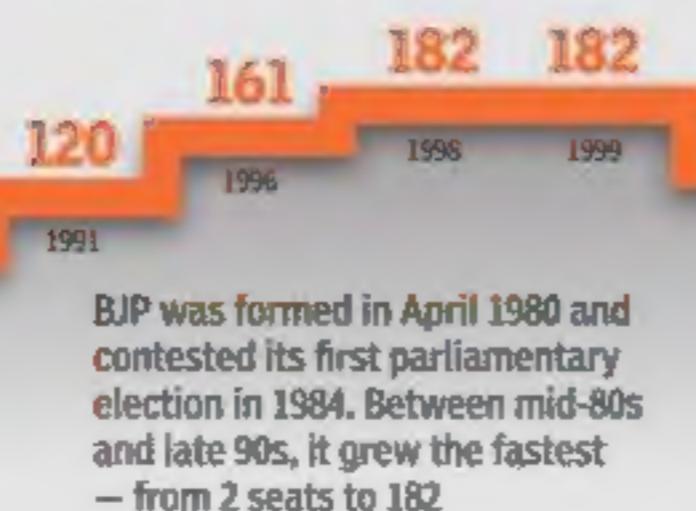
From 3 Seats To Triple-Digit Tallies

BJP's forerunner, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, won three seats in the first Lok Sabha election — two in West Bengal, one in Rajasthan. The erstwhile party hit its peak tally of 35 in 1967, when Deen Dayal Upadhyay was its president.



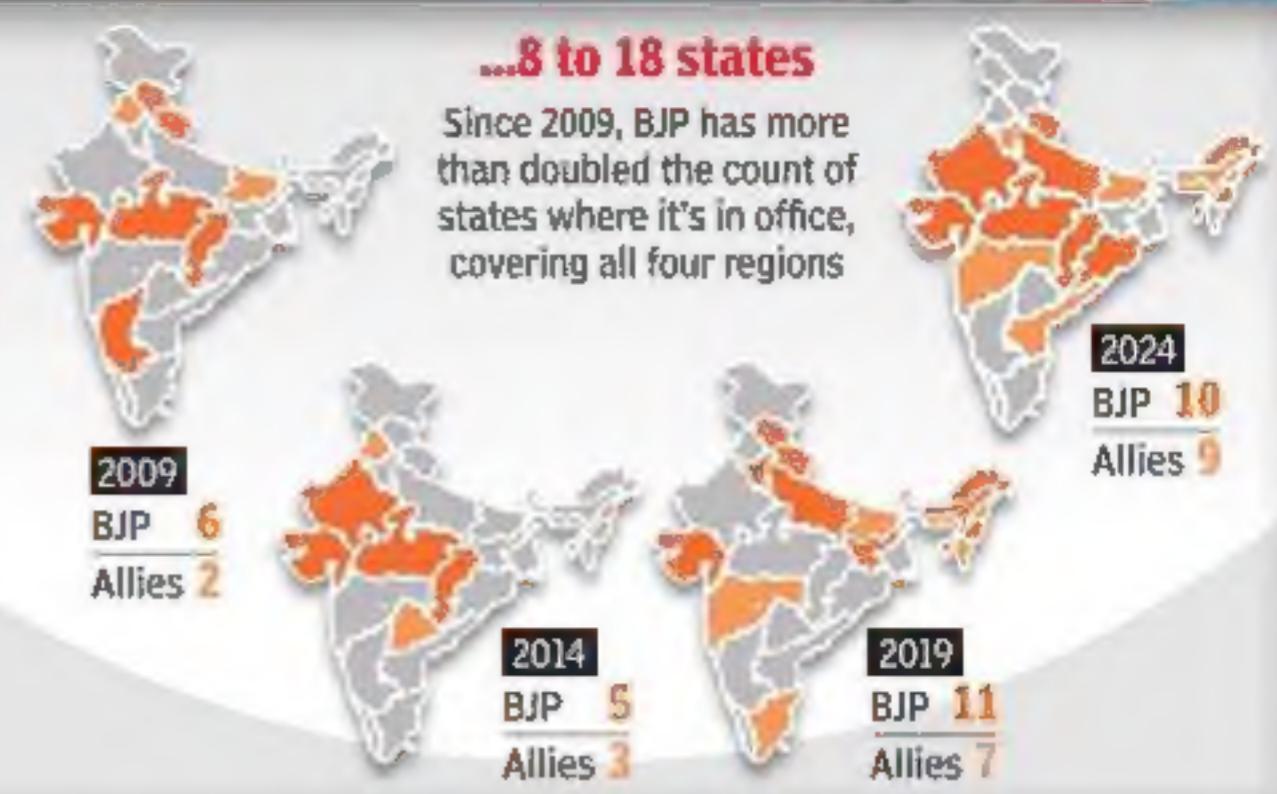
Hindu Mahasabha won four seats in 1951

Zero seats for Jana Sangh in 1977 and 1980 is because the party had merged with the Janata Party during this period



BJP was formed in April 1980 and contested its first parliamentary election in 1984. Between mid-80s and late 90s, it grew the fastest — from 2 seats to 182

Before 2014, BJP-led NDA was in office at the Centre for six years between 1998 and 2004 under Vajpayee. Led by Modi, it won a majority on its own in 2014 and 2019 but fell short this time, though it emerged as the largest party



Not Keeping Ear To The Ground Hurt BJP

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Buoyed by the successful delivery of its poll promises in the past ten years, BJP approached the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as a no-contest but ended up committing mistakes like repeating incumbent MPs' despite adverse ground feedback against them and also roping in candidates from different parties disregarding cadres' sentiment, leading to indifference from them.

Unlike the usual practice — a successful one — of replacing sitting MPs to contain local anti-incumbency, the party brass repeated most candidates, which is seen as a critical contributor to the defeat of many of them.

Faizabad: Mandir no guarantee of mandate

TEAM TOI

The construction of Ram temple and BJP's campaign around consecration of Ram Lalla's idol in Jan, just months ahead of Lok Sabha polls, did not reap the dividends that the party had hoped for.

BJP stalwart Lalu Singh failed to win Faizabad, the parliamentary constituency of which Ayodhya is a part, against Samajwadi Party's Awadh Prasad, who won by a margin of over 54,000 votes.

Prasad, a nine-time MLA and one of the founding members of SP, was locked in a close fight with two-time MP Lalu Singh till Tuesday afternoon as votes were counted.

It was from 1.30pm that Prasad's lead kept inching upwards, before he was announced as the winner. While Prasad reached the counting venue after offering prayers at Hanumangarhi temple, Lalu Singh did not turn up at all.

TEMPLE RUN

A Dalit candidate, Prasad was fielded by Samajwadi Party on a general seat. The party's gamble paid off as over 2.5 lakh Passis in the constituency appear to have backed him.

The saffron camp lost all four other Lok Sabha constituencies in the Ayodhya division — Ambedkarnagar, Barabanki, Sultanpur and Amethi.

In Barabanki, voters elected Congress candidate Tanuj Punia, while SP's Lalji Verma, a seasoned politician, won from Ambedkarnagar.

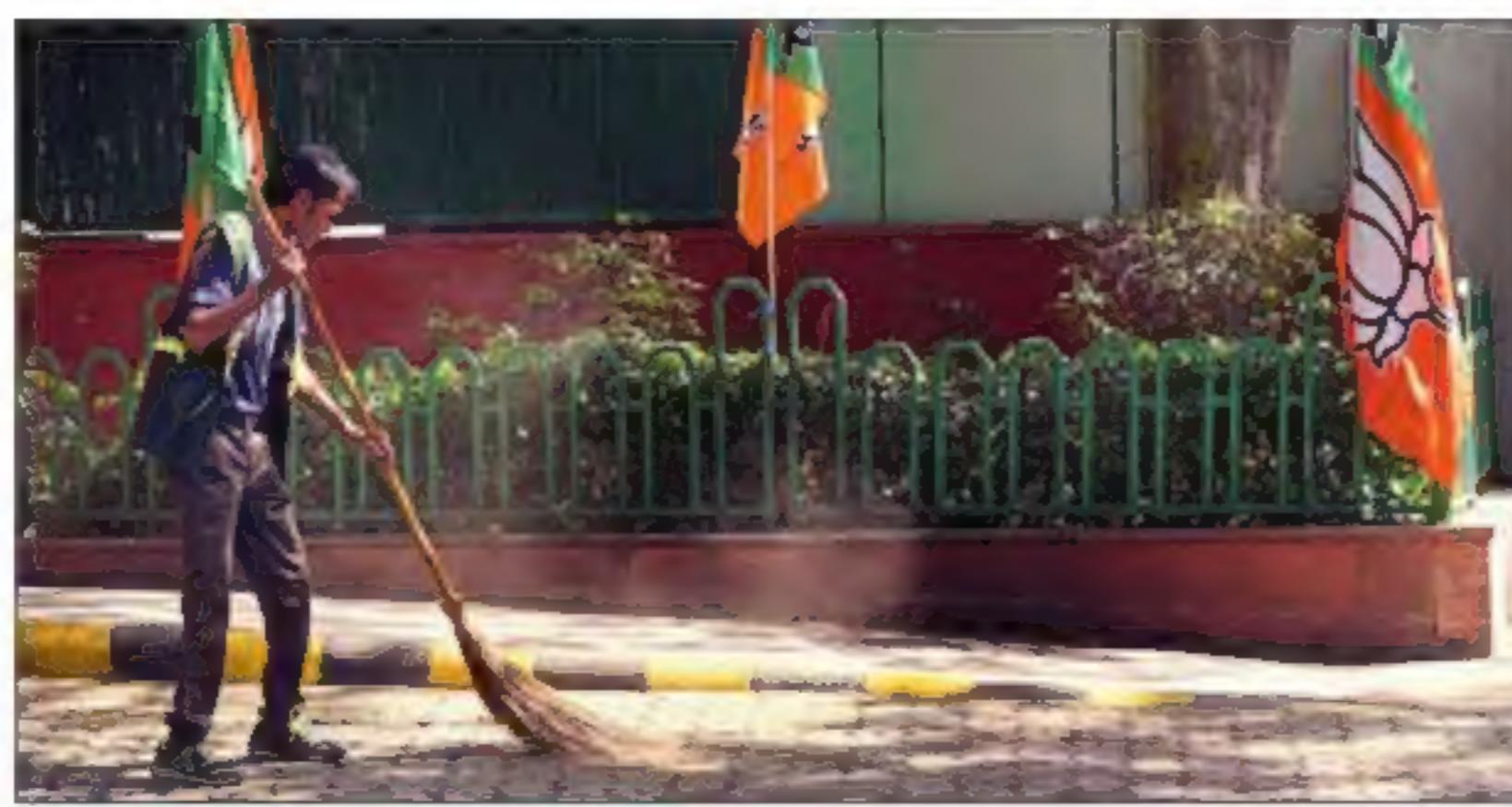
A big upset came in Sultanpur, where BJP's senior parliamentarian Maneka Gandhi lost to SP's Rambhul Nishad. And in Amethi, Union women and child development minister Smriti Irani lost to debutant and Gandhi family loyalist Kishori Lal Sharma.

BJP had won Barabanki, Faizabad and Sultanpur seats in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. BSP's Ritesh Pandey had held Ambedkarnagar in the 2019 polls. This time, Pandey fought from the seat as a BJP candidate but lost to Verma by over 1.37 lakh votes.

mainly in Uttar Pradesh, where the party had the most at stake and was expecting to make gains since SP and BSP were contesting separately. Also going for the party was the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, and the 'law and order' plank of the Yogi Adityanath govt was to work in its favour.

The drafting of 'outsiders', many of them 'tainted', resulted in the 'anti-corruption' plank losing its sheen without bringing in compensatory advantages.

While the opposition inflicted severe damage in UP by using the caste card to thwart the growing consolidation of Hindus, BJP took time to respond to signs of unease among influential communities like Jats, Meenas and the Rajputs.



The claim of opposition parties that Yogi Adityanath would be replaced as Uttar Pradesh chief minister added to an avoidable problem.

Besides, there were reports of poor coordination within the party organisation over the selection of candidates. Differences among party leaders over alliances with local outfits like Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party in eastern UP were a known secret.

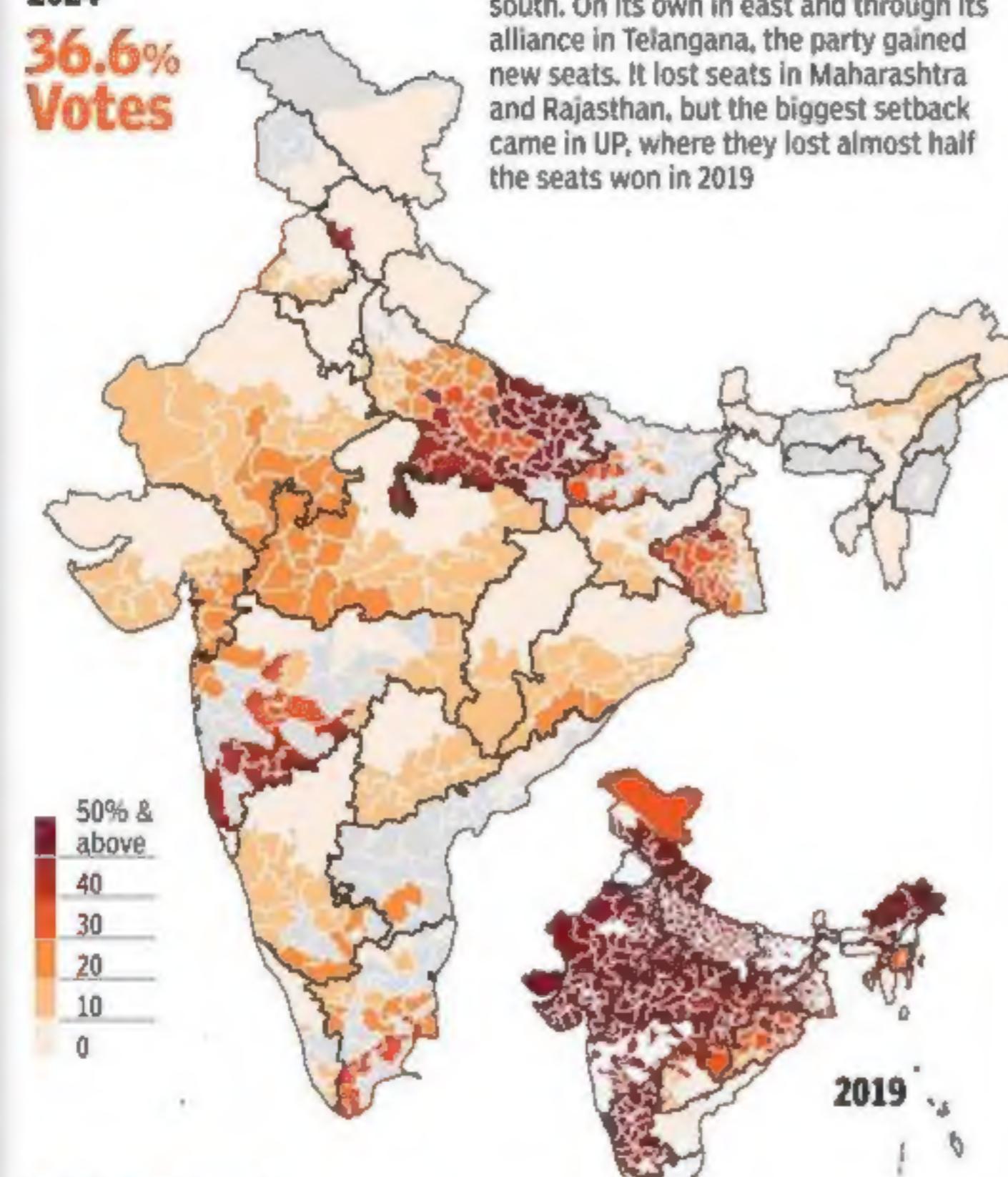
with regional parties like YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh and Biju Janata Dal as the saffron party gained a majority in state polls and a landslide in Lok Sabha elections, winning 19 out of 21 seats there.

Another 'course correction' after the debacle in the Karnataka assembly elections was reinstating veteran leader BS Yediyurappa as the party won 19 seats despite a rout in the state polls just a few months ago. Following Yediyurappa's removal as Karnataka chief minister, there was dissent and dissatisfaction within the party. However, his son Vijayendra's appointment as state unit president in Nov last year significantly addressed any reservations while the tie-up with JD(S) turned out to be valuable.

How BJP Barely Hung On In A Wave-Less Election

2024

36.6% Votes



240 Seats

Telangana and Andhra are two states where the party posted gains that many hadn't expected it to. UP and Maharashtra delivered a blow to their hopes of landing a third straight term on their own. The number of states where BJP has all MPs is down to five — MP, Himachal, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Arunachal

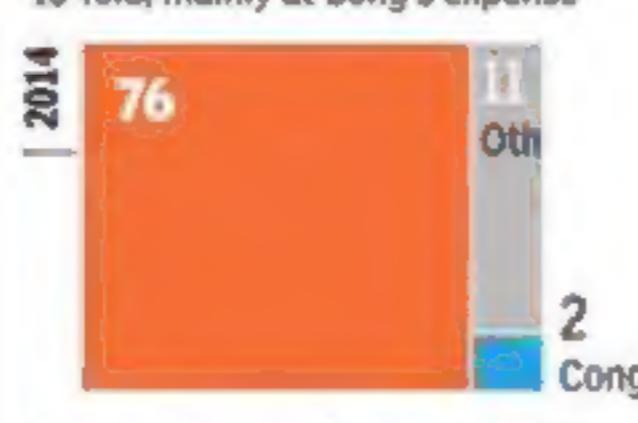
	2009	2014	2019	2024
Andhra Pradesh	0	2	0	3
Assam	4	7	9	9
Bihar	12	22	17	12
Chhattisgarh	10	10	9	10
Goa	1	2	1	1
Gujarat	15	26	26	24
Haryana	0	7	10	5
Himachal Pradesh	3	4	4	4
Jammu & Kashmir	0	3	3	2
Jharkhand	8	12	11	8
Karnataka	19	17	25	17
Madhya Pradesh	16	27	28	29
Maharashtra	9	23	23	10

BJP KEEPS ONLY HALF OF MODI WAVE SEATS

There were 89 seats where BJP's vote share rose by at least 20% in 2014, over 2009. Let's call these Modi Wave seats. In our base year of 2009, it had won only 5 of these seats



In five years, it increased its takings 15-fold, mainly at Cong's expense



In 2019, other parties shaved off some seats from BJP but Cong slid further



BJP's 2014 'wave' pickings were halved in 2024 with SP taking 20 and Cong wresting 11 seats



Saffron citadels breached as INDIA finds Uttar

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Despite inroads in a few states, the resounding win that BJP was expecting to form a govt for a third term ran into obstacles in some of the party's stronghold states.

The most brutal blow for BJP came from Uttar Pradesh, the state with most Lok Sabha constituencies (80). Here, the party managed to win just 33, a far cry from its 2019 tally of 62 seats in the state.

This defeat ensured that BJP failed to get a majority on its own, so much so that PM Modi's win margin in Varanasi fell to 1.5 lakh votes this time. His most-targeted rival, Rahul Gandhi, who lost his family citadel Amethi in 2019, pulled off a victory by a margin of 4.8 lakh votes in Rae Bareli — a statement that the opposition planned to bring home to BJP.

If UP, even after the high-pitched Ram mandir inauguration, failed to vote overwhelmingly for BJP, it was Rajasthan — which overturned a Congress govt and brought BJP to office only last Nov — that refused to deliver 24 of the 25 seats for the saffron camp as it did in 2019. Congress snatched a big chunk of 11

seats, with BJP leading in 14.

Though opposition did not fare as well as it expected in Bihar, BJP lost five seats to INC-NCP govt, break Sena and NCP, and take some Congress functionaries for its own coalition. Voters avenged this backdoor govt by reducing BJP's seats to ten from 23 in 2019.

This general election has ensured that BJP cannot form a govt by itself. It has to bank on pre-poll allies, and Modi must go with Nitish Kumar; Eknath Shinde and Chandrababu Naidu and others if he forms govt.

Maharashtra in many ways. It was the state where BJP tried all its tricks to pull an elected Shiv Sena-Congress-NCP govt, break Sena and NCP, and take some Congress functionaries for its own coalition. Voters avenged this backdoor govt by reducing BJP's seats to ten from 23 in 2019.

The best news for BJP came from Odisha, where the saffron party has swept the state by winning 19 of the 21 LS seats. The party retained all but one seat in Chhattisgarh, which has 11 LS seats. It maintained its number in Gujarat and improved its tally in MP, sweeping all 29 seats in the state, including Chhindwara this time (the constituency is a Kamal Nath bastion, and his son Nakul Nath won the seat for Congress in 2019).

Among its stronghold states, BJP's 'voterloo' was

the results declared on Tuesday.

Having saturated its seat share in the party's stronghold states in the north and west in 2019, BJP was looking to recover ground it could lose to 10 years of anti-incumbency from new territories. But its aggressive Mission South and East left it with both tangible and intangible gains.

First, the disappointment. BJP was unable to add more seats to its 2019 tally of 29 of the 130 Lok Sabha seats it won in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in 2019. TMC has wrestled six seats back from BJP and taken its own score to 29 LS seats.

The best news for BJP came from Odisha, where the saffron party has swept the state by winning 19 of the 21 LS seats, reducing ruling BJD to just one seat, alongside overthrowing CM Naveen Patnaik's five-term government in the state. BJP had won just eight seats in 2019.

New territories help BJP compensate for losses

TEAM TOI

Having saturated its seat share in the party's seat share in the party's stronghold states in the north and west in 2019, BJP was looking to recover ground it could lose to 10 years of anti-incumbency from new territories. But its aggressive Mission South and East left it with both tangible and intangible gains.

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Second, despite negative feedback from party workers, BJP could not gauge the apprehensions stoked by opposition amongst the backward castes. Their efforts seem to have gone in vain," said a BJP functionary.

Third, the factor contributing to BJP's loss was its failed attempt to blunt the minority aggression and its consolidation behind the opposition, primarily the SP-Congress alliance, which successfully dented its tally. Analysts said BJP was unable to polarise Hindu voters, who got divided on caste lines, despite its high-pitched religious-cultural narrative centred around inauguration of Ram temple, renovation of Kashi Vishwanath Dham and aggressive penetration of the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah case.

Caste-based parties, which joined hands with BJP to forge "an invincible caste alliance", did not tickle voters' minds, who, at places, were fed up with 'OBC vs upper caste' narratives, primarily in eastern UP.

3 reasons why tally halved in largest state

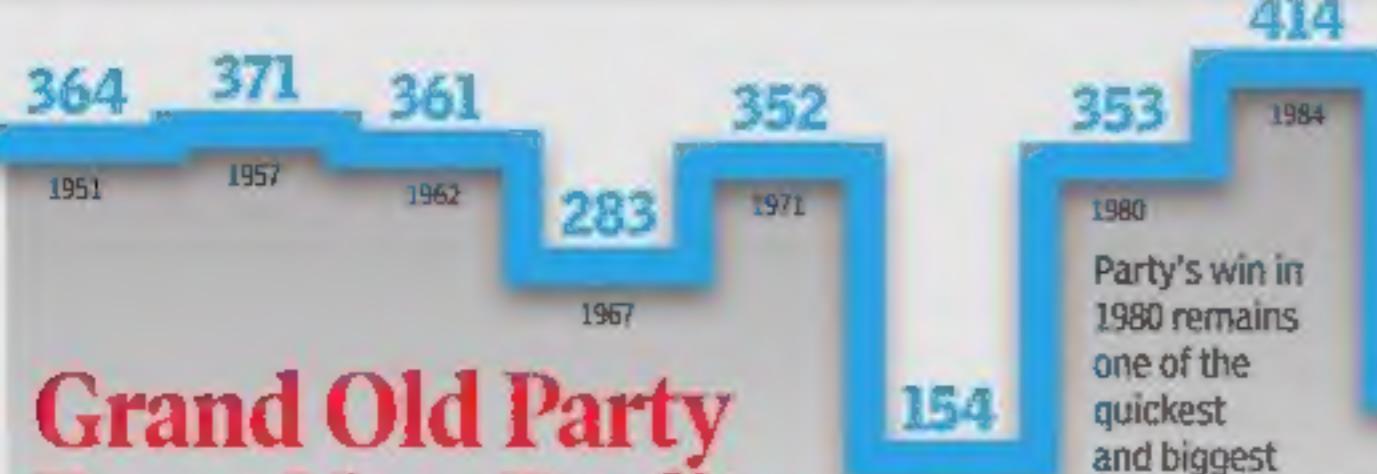
Rajiv Srivastava & Pankaj Shah | TNM

Lucknow: Since 2014, UP has stood out for BJP polls after polls. The politically crucial state stood out this time, too, but for INDIA bloc partners, Congress & Samajwadi Party.

While BJP registered its biggest loss in UP since 2014, Congress, with six seats, could sense its much-awaited revival in the state. Its ally SP could end up as the biggest gainer both in terms of number of seats, winning 35, and the vote share of around 33% from 18.11% in 2019. The biggest loser was the Mayawati-BSP, which drew a blank and reached its lowest ebb as its vote share dipped to 9.3%.

In their campaigns, PM Modi and Amit Shah kept assuaging the apprehensions stoked by opposition amongst the backward castes. Their efforts seem to have gone in vain," said a BJP functionary.

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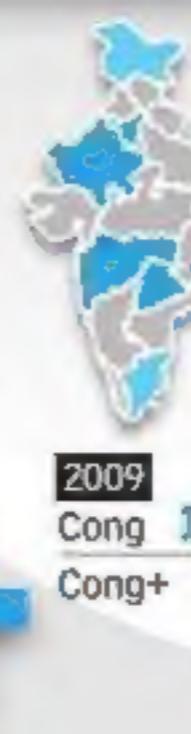


Grand Old Party Faces New Reality

After winning five straight terms, Congress was voted out of office by a united opposition in 1977. It had two more phases of decline with the longest one starting in 2014, though it would count 2024 as a turnaround in its fortunes

Despite 197 seats and a 40% vote share, Congress sat in the opposition in 1989. Aided by a sympathy vote following Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991, it returned to office in 1991 in a minority govt and launched ambitious economic reforms

United Front and NDA coalitions kept Congress out of office for nearly a decade starting mid-90s. Then came UPA's 10-year stint that ended with BJP returning with a majority and reducing Congress to its lowest tally ever in 2014



11 to 3 in 15 years
In 2009, Congress was in office in 11 states and its UPA allies in 3. By 2019, battered electorally, the party was left in control of only a handful of states



Spunky RaGa Gives Cong A Comeback Tune

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When, contrary to many pundits' and its own expectations, Congress lost late-2023 assembly polls in the heartland, two things didn't happen. One, Rahul Gandhi didn't lose his temper. Two, he disagreed with party veterans like Ashok Gehlot who said BJP won by polarising voters. He had pointed out that in Rajasthan, for example, Congress vote share (40%) was just 2 percentage points behind BJP's (42%). That's not a sign of polarisation, Gandhi had said, that's a sign of poor communication.

Four months later, that cool-headed analysis seems to have paid off. Gandhi had told Congress seniors that an Ayodhya-focussed BJP can be confronted, with a good agenda backed by better campaign.

The 2024 general elections did see Congress run a far better campaign – fronted by a calm, collected Rahul Gandhi. The change seems to have happened as he walked those miles, crisscrossing India during his Bharat Jodo Yatra.

The 2024 Congress story is a story of Rahul Gandhi's evolution. The new Gandhi didn't let Congress's poor Lok Sabha numbers in 2014 and 2019 demoralise him. He didn't let December 2023's heartland losses break his heart. He didn't let an aggressive Narendra Modi intimidate him. His party was in blue funk in December 2023. Congress's 2024 strategy was predicated on wins in MP and Chhattisgarh and a close fight in Rajasthan. Anticipation of good results had even led to Congress deferring the orga-

nisation restructuring by a year, and the defeats saddled it with serious holes in management of states close to polls.

But Rahul rallied his troops, ordered fresh strategising, and worked on a manifesto that went into the heart of the Congress' UPA-era agenda of welfare-jobs-growth. If the manifesto struck a chord with voters, Congress owes much to Gandhi. He has been at the forefront of a "guarantees" based welfare policy and caste outreach, repeatedly arguing this was the only way to take on a no-holds-barred campaign of polarisation by BJP.

For Gandhi and the party, the stakes were clear: The Modi machine binned this general election as the ticket to Modi's place in history. There was huge asymmetry in resources between Congress and BJP, blanket media coverage of Modi, arrests of opposition leaders, and income-tax action on Congress bank accounts. Post Ayodhya consecration, it looked like a one-party election.

Then came the poll schedule. A two-month, seven phase election seemed to favour Modi, who could campaign across the country, backed by a party flush with funds.

For Congress, the much talked about existential crisis seemed finally here.

Except for Rahul Gandhi.

He persevered, held strategy sessions, and sharpened his ideas. The key idea: maximise gains in south, pick up seats in the north, and try breaking new ground in states that had gone barren after the advent of Modi. Seats Congress has won in the North – UP, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab – are a testament to a resilience that none but Gandhi believed in.

It was a methodical approach



ach. Few in the party wanted a East-West Bharat Jodo Yatra after the December state defeats, but the Gandhi scion had a plan. Strategists picked 100-plus districts and seats where they thought Congress stood a decent chance in general elections. Gandhi covered 110 districts across 15 states in 62 days. The joint shows with INDIA allies became a forerunner for a campaign of unity.

The approach was pragmatic. At the high table of Congress planning, Kharge and Gandhi were unanimous that the party had to strike compromises and ensure that the anti-BJP alliance held firm. Congress contested 326 seats, the lowest in LS election history.

This was premised on one belief: Rahul Gandhi had – that Modi had to be opposed and

that the opposition can't be a passive player or an occasional right-wing drumbeater out of fear of popular backlash, or stay on right side of what Congress sees as a vindictive prosecution machinery.

This was Gandhi's strategy from Day 1 of the first Modi sarkar. He took a 55-day sabbatical to force Congress to toe his line. That led to public agitations against amendments to the Land Acquisition Act. That also made him one of the key players in getting Lalu Prasad to accept his nemesis Nitish as the face of the "magha-bandhan" that humbled BJP in Bihar in late 2015. There were a string of disappointments, especially the Pulwama-ma-influenced 2019 elections. But later, working as the backroom strategist after Kharge's

elevation as party chief, he unfurled the Yatras and the agenda of pro-poor outreach and "mohabat ki dukaan". In these polls, Gandhi's sharply ideological line paid dividends. Broken up opposition parties like Uddhav Sena and Sharad Pawar-NCP, parties targeted by probe agencies, RJD, AAP and JMM, agreed to take Gandhi's line – that standing for secularism, civil rights and the Constitution was the only counter in a Modi-dominated, Hindutva-laden political atmosphere. And INDIA's campaign had the unmistakable imprint of Rahul Gandhi.

Caste census emerged from this thinking as a stick to beat BJP with, and Opposition targeted votes of three pan-India groups – Dalits, Muslims and OBCs. Inside his own par-

WINNING LINES

Khata khat, khata khat, khata khat!

"Haath ne jhaadu pakad liya hai ('Hand' has picked up the 'broom')"

"It's a revolutionary manifesto"

"You must've seen that the PM has panicked, he is shaken, worried"

Addressed 107 rallies and conventions

Dress | Trademark casual trousers, white T-shirt and joggers

From 'stop-gap chief' to Cong's Dalit face, Kharge gains heft

For the octogenarian Mallikarjun Kharge, who took over Congress presidency amid crisis and was widely viewed as a place-holder, the 2024 performance endows him with gravitas that removes doubts about his efficacy. The veteran addressed 108 rallies and brought credibility to Congress's social justice platform as a Dalit. His cool approach in defusing crises in state factions ensured a united campaign. Another plus was his clout in his home state, as the party swept Hyderabad-Karnataka region largely because of him. With his experience and stature, Kharge ensured easy coordination with allies. Kharge is the man to watch out for in coming months and years. TN

short videos, wit over anger and outrage, targeting Modiji on manifesto issues. They reminded many of the 2004 "aam aadmi" campaign. Door knocks, press conferences, mukkads were used for targeting voters at block and sub-district level. Gandhi's own YouTube channel notched 35 crore views in 28 days till mid-May.

2024 will go down as a rare election in contemporary times when a party fought an election on its manifesto, even delivering it to every household in a constituency.

It showed that voters can reward simple promises targeting basic needs even in times of polarisation and cult-style campaigns.

It showed this time Rahul Gandhi, fighting an aggressive right, had got in right.

Congress ticks right boxes, finds mojo for upcoming battles

TEAM TOI

For Congress foraging in the 50s in Lok Sabha over the last decade, the doubling of tally is a psychological victory. The decent score for the crisis-ridden party is seen as its revival, as it comes with appreciable performance in the north and the northeast.

The geographical advance was not anticipated in the election that came against the backdrop of the Ayodhya temple inauguration and the party's woes of resource crunch and defections. The turnaround points to what it has managed to get-right – policy, communication and leadership. These are the three fronts on which Congress would feel confident going forward.

It has cemented the leadership of the triumvirate of Mallikarjun Kharge-Rahul Gandhi-Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. In 2024 polls, they addressed 315 rallies, communicating with voters and taking on BJP.

Marginalised among the urban and upper caste demographics, Congress lurches towards a Mandalite reinvention, espousing causes like "caste census-50% ceiling removal", along with an aggressive welfarist and secular outreach. Its decimation in the Dec assembly polls had raised doubts about the policy maker-over's efficacy. But LS results have restored its credibility and Congress may have shed



Together they rose: INDIA proves bigger than sum of its parts

scores the wide social net that INDIA weaved.

The pooling of bases with a joint campaign worked in ways best seen in contrast with 2022 UP assembly polls when Akhilesh had spurned Congress. SP fell way short as BJP romped home despite evidence of voter resentment. Forward to 2024. SP-Congress alliance fashioned a formidable social base. Rahul's presence as the ideological bulwark against Modi ensured consolidation of anti-BJP forces – backwards on social justice, Muslims on communalism and Dalits over "threat to Constitution". The overlap of disparate agendas, helped by Congress's own shift towards Mandalite politics, produced a social churn that BJP was not ready for.

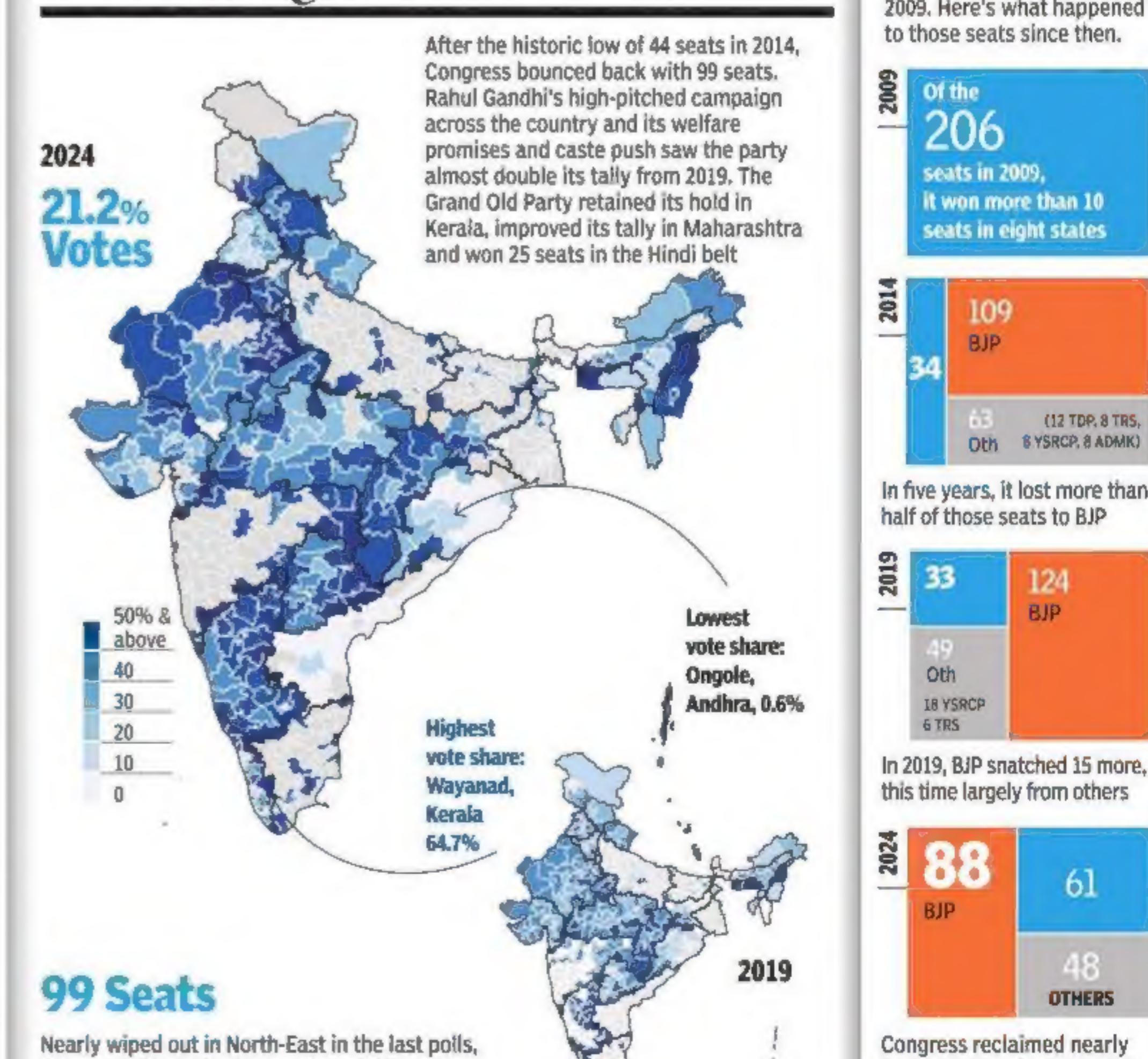
Just how the word "gathbandhan" spread across the heartland, ensuring vote transfer among allies, is notwithstanding a mirage. The big glue was Congress's willingness to cede seats to allies that it would not have otherwise.

Even discordant notes helped. Congress and AAP refused to join hands in Punjab, realising that the top two players aligning would open space for BJP. In the end, BJP drew a crippler. Congress and Left stayed as traditional poles in Kerala, limiting a belligerent BJP. The only friction was in Bengal, where TMC refused to partner Congress despite entreaties. But the net big loser was BJP.

Mandate 2024, billed as Modi's ticket to history, ended up becoming a challenge that stopped BJP short of majority and NDA of a big majority.

The SP-Congress tie-up in UP delivered a jolt bordering on embarrassment, while the MVA gave BJP a major shock. The JMM-Congress-CPI(ML)-RJD combat put up a good fight in Jharkhand despite its mascot, Hemant Soren, in prison. The same was true about NC-Congress in J&K-Ladakh. If the list is long, it only under-

Congress Falls One Shy Of Century After Strong All-Round Show



99 Seats

Nearly wiped out in North-East in the last polls, Congress clawed back seats in multiple states, including Assam, Manipur and Nagaland.

	2009	2014	2019	2024
Andhra Pradesh	21	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	21	2	1	6
Rajasthan	20	0	0	8
Maharashtra	17	2	1	13
Kerala	13	8	15	14
Madhya Pradesh	12	2	1	0
Telangana	12	2	3	8
Gujarat	11	0	0	1
Haryana	9	1	0	5
Punjab	8	3	8	7
Tamil Nadu	8	0	8	9
Assam	7	3	3	3
NCT of Delhi	7	0	0	0

	2009	2014	2019	2024
Karnataka	6	9	1	9
Odisha	6	0	1	1
West Bengal	6	4	2	1
Uttarakhand	5	0	0	0
Bihar	2	2	1	3
Jammu & Kashmir	2	0	0	0
Chattisgarh	1	1	2	1
Goa	1	0	1	1
Himachal Pradesh	1	0	0	0
Jharkhand	1	0	1	2
Other Northeast	6	5	0	3
Other UTs	4	0	2	2

Note: Peak tally doesn't include Assam and J&K | Source: EC

TEAM TOI

New Delhi: In previous national elections, BJP lorded over the social media space. In LS 2024, YouTubers played a significant role in snatching the space out of the saffron party's grip, thereby improving Congress-led INDIA's position. Anti-govt influencers earned eyeballs and shaped opinion, even attracting the attention of British weekly The Economist. As per statista.com, India has 476M YouTube viewers. Statistics shows Dhruv Rathee is the most viewed You-

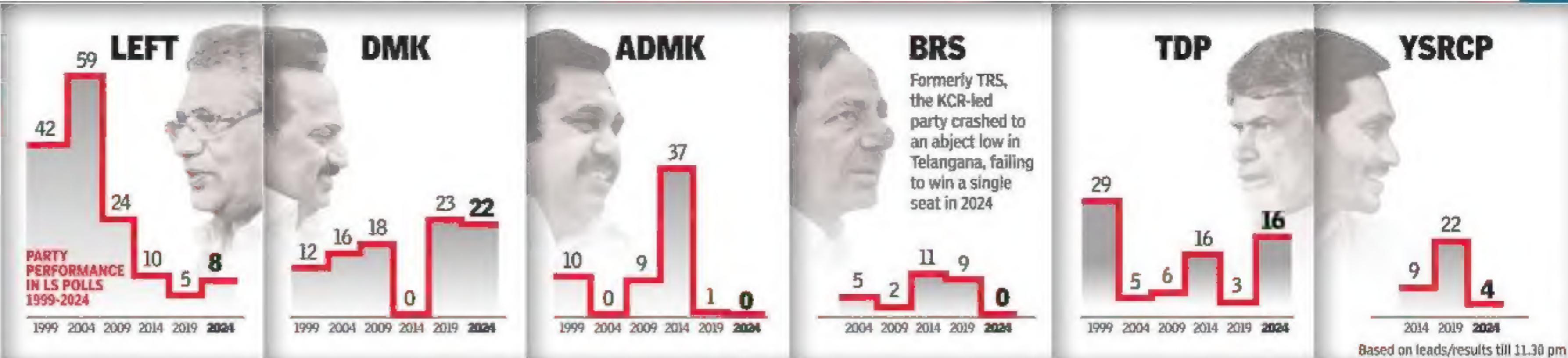
tuber during this election. Rathee's Modi: The Real Story alone garnered 27M views. Media commentator Sevan Ninan describes him as "the big new phenomenon of these elections". Media commentator and columnist Madhavan Narayanan says that YouTubers like him are often playing the role of what mainstream media ought to do: check facts, question self-contradictions and supply meaningful context and background.

The impact is noticeable. The govt aims to bring broadcast services, including OTT channels, within its ambit through the proposed Broadcast Services (Regulation) Bill, she says.

"People seem to like them for their passion, informality and storytelling styles. News-

Beyond Big Two, Power Players

Twelve major players outside of BJP and Congress, particularly those in south India, together won 138 of the 543 seats in 2019 LS polls. Most of these parties threw in their lot with either NDA or the INDIA bloc this time. Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP, Naveen Patnaik's BJD and Mayawati's BSP were notable exceptions



Akhilesh Takes A Step 'Backward' To Move Forward And Beyond MY

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Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had got off to a good start. His early emphasis on 'Pichde (backward), Dalit, Alpasaankhyak (minorities)' was combined with a sharp focus on farmer issues, joblessness, paper leaks and rising prices. It turned out to be one of his best election strategies, backed by intelligent candidate selection.

The Samajwadi Party has impressively led the INDIA bloc charge in UP winning 37 of the 62 seats it contested, its best showing in the state in a general election. The PDA formulation, in particular, became a unifying force. The highlight of this newfound 'social engineering' was that the party managed to win over Dalits in general and Jatavs in particular who were, till now, seen as traditional BSP voters.

This election has also shattered the hypothesis that Dalits and Yadavs can never unite in UP. As per caste assessments based on exit poll, 65% of Scheduled Caste votes polled went to the SP — an increase of 21% as compared to 2019 poll. Of these, 32% of Jatav votes polled went to SP though they have traditionally been committed voters of BSP. The shift was not only from the BSP to SP. SP strategists insist that the jump in Dalit voters was more than what was visible in 2019 Lok Sabha polls. "In 2019, SP had contested elections in alliance with the BSP. So it was no surprise that Dalits voted for our party. This time we contested against BSP and got an overwhelming response from the Dalit community."



EXPANSION MODE: Akhilesh's new-found 'social engineering' managed to win over Dalits in general and Jatavs in particular who were, till now, seen as traditional BSP voters

said a senior SP functionary.

Apart from the PDA pitch, Akhilesh succeeded in turning 'Abki baar 400 paar' into a 'Save the Constitution' narrative. He was among the first to say that the BJP wanted 400-plus seats to change the Constitution and end reservation for Dalits and backwards. This worked to bind together jobless youths and families from Dalit and backward segments.

Wooing Dalits & non-Yadav OBCs

After the 2019 LS alliance between SP and BSP, when Mayawati had walked away with 10 seats and Akhilesh was left with 5, it was evident that vote transfer between SP and its ally was a one-way street. The SP leadership felt cheated. Party strate-

gists then shifted their focus to Dalit leaders with whom the party was already in touch.

Former BSP minister Ghuram Ram, a founding member, was the first big dalit leader to switch loyalties to SP. Soon after, more joined Akhilesh. The SP did not only pick senior leaders. Regional coordinators, former ministers and other office-bearers of BSP joined the exodus. Akhilesh made it a point to ensure that in press meets he was accompanied by Dalit leaders.

He decided to rope in non-Yadav OBCs as well. By Oct 2021, prominent backward BSP leaders like sitting MLAs Lalji Verma and Ramachal Rajbhar were with SP. The focus on non-Yadav OBCs was aptly reflected

in the appointment of his party's national executive in 2023. Of 62 members in the committee, around 40% were 'non-Yadav' OBCs and hailed from electorally influential communities like Kurmi, Rajbhar and Nishads. The list also included six members who were Dalits.

The blowback

As expected, the focus on Dalits and Non-Yadav OBCs left upper caste, Yadav and Muslim functionaries uncomfortable. Those eyeing tickets for 2024 Lok Sabha polls and those offered better deals by BJP were the first ones to snap. But that did not deter Akhilesh from giving tickets as per his PDA formula to all castes and communities.

At least 14 candidates were ex-BSP. In fact, Akhilesh shed the image of the SP being an 'M-Y' party by giving the least number of tickets to Muslims and Yadavs in the party's history. "Of course, it was all done after taking community leaders into confidence, explaining to them how a large number of Muslim and Yadav candidates help BJP's bid for counter-polarisation," said an analyst.

For SP strategists, the final highlight was a bunch of victories from unlikely quarters like Faizabad, which it had last won in 1998. "The victory of Awadesh Prasad and the tough fight that Sunita Verma put up against BJP is important as it exposes BJP's attempt to use religion for political gains," said a senior SP functionary. Two other important victories for SP came from Rampur and Moradabad — seats which have the maximum Muslim population.



SABKE SAATH: Nitish's flip-flops had no impact on voters

Allies May Change, But Nitish Remains Axis Of Bihar Politics

Modan Kumar & Manoj Chaurasia | TNM

Patna: Politics is a game of possibilities, and no one knows this better than Bihar CM Nitish Kumar who has ditched enough allies over the years. His spectacular performance in the Lok Sabha polls has once again ensured he remains the alliance's face in Bihar till next year's assembly polls. More so, because former deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi's untimely death has left BJP without a stalwart in the state.

BJP can, of course, campaign using PM Modi's name, as it did in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, but given Nitish's considerable support base among the Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) and women — JD(U) has won 12 of the 16 seats it was allotted under the seat-sharing arrangement — it would not want to distance him.

The EBC category comprising 130 small caste groups like Dhanukas, Kumbhars, Katheras, Nonyas, Kewats, Nais, Mallahs, Telis and Tatmas, makes up 36% of Bihar's electorate, as per the recent caste survey. Along with this group, Nitish was backed by support from his Kurmi-Koeri (Kushwaha) community. Kurmis are 2.9% of Bihar's electorate and Koeris 4.2%. The CM also benefitted from the Mahadalit category comprising 21 castes that he helped create. Mahadalits account for some

a Union minister for more than six years, is known to nurse ambitions of holding a top national-level post: PM, prez or vice-prez. Last time he was in NDA (July 2017 to August 2022), he had wanted to succeed M Venkaiah Naidu as VP. The late Sushil Modi had revealed this and insiders say BJP's denial of Nitish's demand had precipitated his turn towards Mahagathbandhan. Again, in Mahagathbandhan, Nitish tried to bring the opposition together to oust PM Modi in 2024, hoping he would be appointed IN-DIA bloc's convenor, and PM if the bloc succeeded. But when Congress disappointed him, he rushed into NDA's embrace.

Given these facts, Nitish remains the "axis" of state politics. Strangely, his flip-flops has had no impact on voters this time. JD(U) has got 18.50% votes in Bihar, only 2% less than BJP's 20.53%.

Maya caught in her own jaal as Jatav voters shift loyalty

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2014 REDUX: BSP failed to score any Lok Sabha seat wins

Lucknow: A disastrous performance by Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is a sign that the party has lost its core Jatav voters, the subcaste its chief Mayawati belongs to.

Her strategy to have a post-pol role in search of a "satta ki master chaabi (master key to power)" has been hit as much as her own image of being an influential Dalit leader — Jatavs, who form 55% of the Dalit population and 11% of the total population, had rallied behind her till now. Chandrashekhar Azad, the man who has presented himself before Dalits as a viable alternative, has won from Nagina on the banner of his Azad Samaj Party.

Being out of office for long in UP is one reason to drive core voters away, apart from BJP making inroads with its welfare schemes. BSP is now back to its position in 2014 when it had zilch. It has not only failed to open its account, but its vote share has dipped from over 19% in 2019 to around 8%. It had won 10 seats in 2019 LS polls when it contested in alliance with Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal.

This time, the campaign was marked by missteps. Firstly, the decision to contest

alone was perceived as a 'suicidal move'. There were voices of dissent even from within. Prominent Muslim leaders like Imran Masood and Amroha MP Danish Ali were expelled after they reached out to Rahul Gandhi. Masood won from Saharanpur on a Congress ticket. Knowing that BSP would not make it alone, MPs Sangeeta Azad, Ritesh Pandey and Malook Nagar also quit.

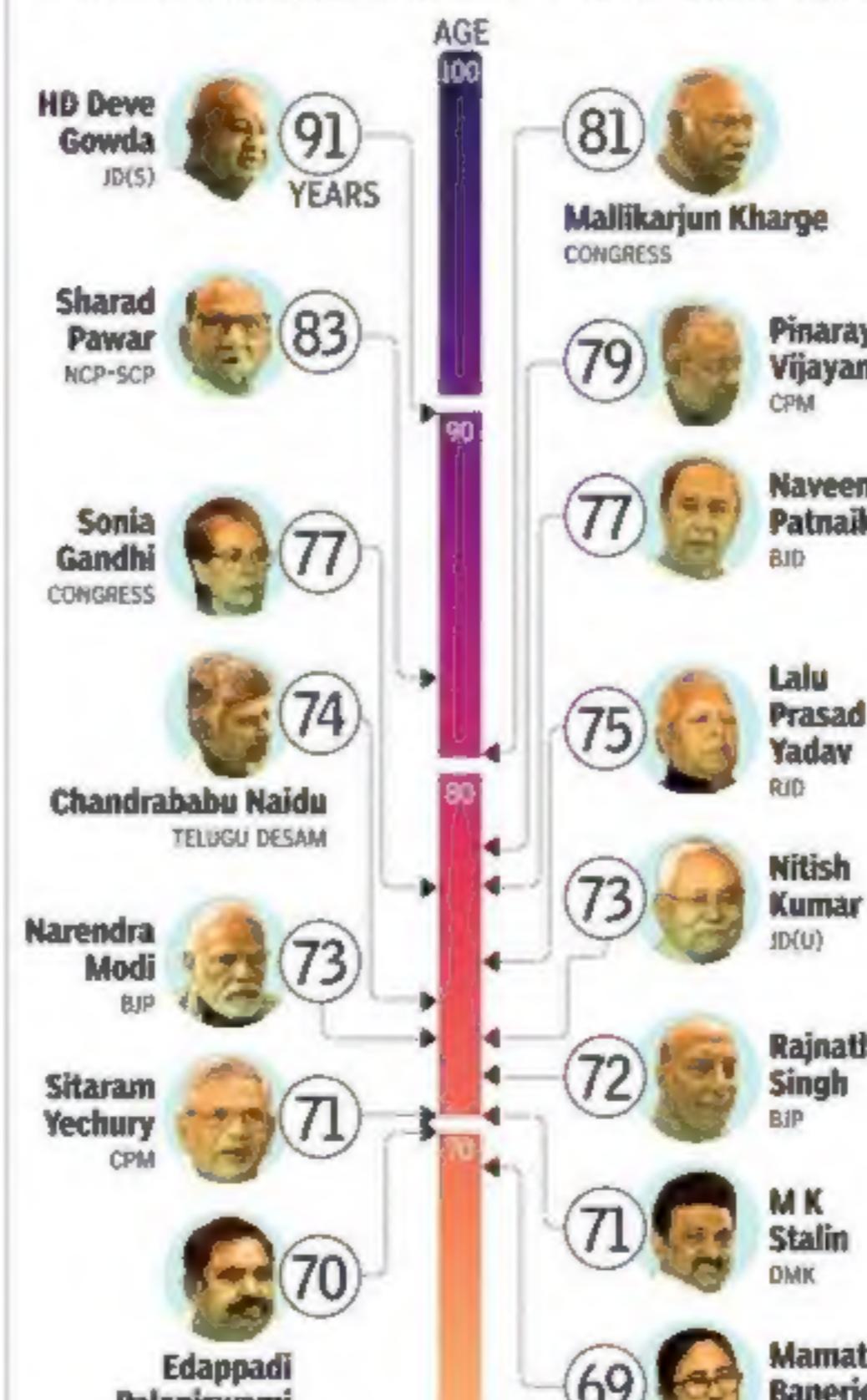
Mayawati stuck to her party's foundational ideology to distribute tickets based on 'Jiski Jitni Hissedar, Uski Utne Bhagidari'. She fielded 20 Muslims, 18 Dalits, 16 OBCs and 15 Brahmins, but this included several BJP turncoats. They supplanted candidates who were the party's first choice. In all, BSP re-

placed its candidates in 14 seats. But it was the replacement of Shrikala Singh, wife of gangster-politician Dhannay Singh in Jaunpur, and ex-BJP district president Dayashanker Mishra in Basti which led to the perception that BSP was acting under pressure. "Mishra has been active in Basti for more than three decades. He could have done substantial damage to BJP," said sources.

The last bit of controversy was around her nephew Akash Anand, who was midway through the campaign divested of the national coordinator's post and succeeded by Mayawati herself. This led to speculation that BSP's leadership took the step to shield him, having realised it was not winning even a single seat.

Venerable Veterans Far From Done

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal referred to BJP's 'retire-at-75' policy for netas to wonder if PM Modi would also follow suit. Seasoned campaigners are a presence to reckon with across the political spectrum. Here's a look at the prominent names



Tejashwi leads charge on road to 2025 assembly polls

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Patna: There was much at stake for the family of RJD chief Lalu Prasad in the Lok Sabha elections. His two daughters — Misa Bharti and Rohini Acharya — were contesting from Patliputra and Saran respectively, while younger son and political heir Tejashwi Prasad Yadav was leading the combined Opposition for the first time in a general election.

After drawing a blank in the 2019 LS polls, RJD has managed to claw back lost ground by winning 4 of the 26 seats it fought, including Patliputra where Misa contested. Tejashwi has now set the tone for the assembly elections due next year: the verdict makes it clear that he will be the opposition's face for Bihar CM against Nitish Kumar or a BJP candidate. In all, the RJD member and his allies (Congress and CPI-ML) have won 9 of the total 40 seats.

Tejashwi has already had his share of ups and downs. After the 2015 state polls which RJD contested with JD(U), he became deputy CM. By sticking to an agenda of jobs, employment, education, and health, the 34-year-old Tejashwi generated a following among the youth. He largely succeeded



KEEPES LANTERN BURNING: Nitish's about-turns have given Tejashwi an opportunity to emerge from the shadow of his father Lalu Prasad

in conveying the message that it was he who facilitated "5 lakh jobs in 17 months" as deputy CM of Bihar.

Tejashwi did not resort to personal attacks on Nitish when he lost his job after the JD(U) veteran parted ways with RJD in Jan this year. Instead, by refusing to needle Nitish, Tejashwi kept observers guessing. He provoked speculation about Nitish's plans when he said that "chacha" would take a big decision after the June 4 poll results. It forced Nitish to make it clear in his public meetings that he would never part ways with BJP.

Nitish's about-turns have given Tejashwi an opportunity

to emerge from the shadow of his father and RJD chief Lalu Prasad. He has established himself not only as the face of his party but also of the opposition bloc. The elections have also proved Tejashwi's willingness to experiment by fielding candidates of castes other than those that traditionally dominate in a particular seat. He picked a Dalit candidate in a constituency meant for the general category. And he fielded Kushwaha candidates — who belong to Nitish's caste — to dent the NDA vote bank. His ability to look beyond Lalu's M-Y (Muslim-Yadav) formulation is expected to yield rich dividends in the long run.

KCR, man seeking national flight, crashlands where it all began

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BRS, formerly TRS, fought its first LS election in 2004, winning 5 seats

Hyderabad: Telangana celebrated 10 years of its formation on June 2 this year, but K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) and his Bharat Rashtriya Samithi (BRS), which led the movement to carve out India's youngest state, are back where they were over 20 years ago.

The party, in its original avatar as TRS, was formed in 2001 and contested its first Lok Sabha election in 2004 winning five seats as part of the UPA alliance. It won two in 2009 in alliance with TDP. In 2014, Telangana was formed and KCR became the undisputed leader of the state. Not winning a single seat this time leaves KCR with no role at the

made during the assembly polls. But going by the results, people want to give more time to Congress," an analyst said.

BRS had won 11 LS seats in 2014 without allies, securing 34% of votes. In 2019, its vote share rose to 41% though it won fewer seats (9). This was months after sweeping assembly polls with 88 of the state's 117 seats. KCR seemed invincible at that point. In retrospect, it was the stage from where his popularity graph began dipping. He has been unable to arrest the slide since. His "inaccessibility" and unresolved local issues like state public service commission question paper leaks, joblessness among urban youth, allegations of corruption have dented his image.

Out of Kejriwal shadow, lone ranger Mann brings AAP consolation prize

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Chandigarh: The turmoil in Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ahead of the Lok Sabha election turned the contest into a high-stakes personal battle for Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann — he was leading a campaign in the absence of Arvind Kejriwal and Raghubir Singh. Mann with his own govt's two-year performance as a key issue.

AAP's victory in three of the 13 seats in Punjab — Sangrur, Anandpur Sahib and Hoshiarpur — provides the party consolation in the light of the washout in Delhi and is a morale-booster to Mann. AAP has reclaimed Sangrur, represented twice by the chief minister himself in the past. Overall performance must be gauged vis-à-vis numbers notched up by rival parties as well as AAP's tally in Delhi. Mann would want to assess the performance of four cabinet colleagues who lost and why the par-



LAST MAN STANDING

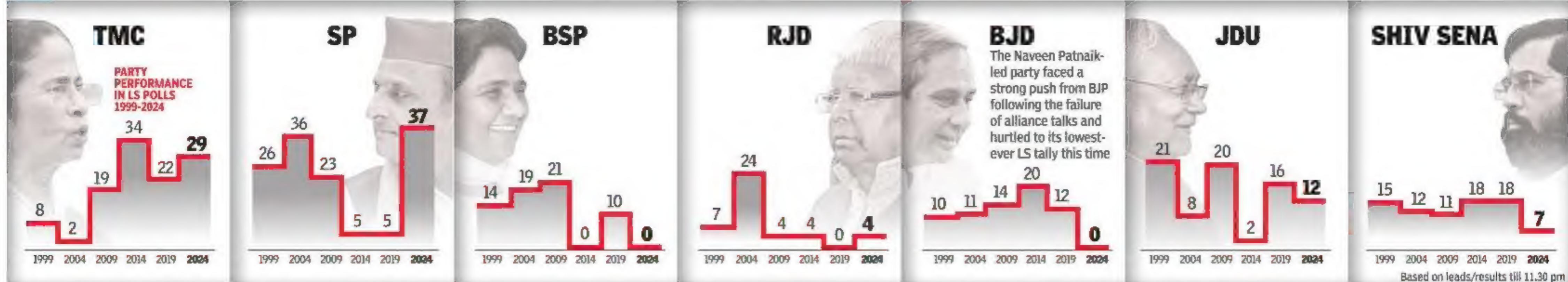
ty's 92 MLAs in the 117-member state legislature failed to get more leads for AAP in their assembly segments.

Stepping out of Kejriwal's shadow and with a free hand to shape strategy, he was more than a star campaigner. Uncertainty over Kejriwal and Chadha's invol-

vement in Punjab affairs and multi-cornered contests against Congress, SAD and BJP made his role crucial. Unlike the Punjab Congress unit, where no single leader hogged the limelight, AAP's campaign revolved around the CM.

Though results fall far short of any intended target, the score would give AAP visibility in Parliament and national presence amid the troubles that beset its leadership in Delhi. Kejriwal had put Mann in the spotlight with the slogan 'Sansad mein bhi Bhagwant Mann...' (Mann in Parliament too), seeking votes to "strengthen" the chief minister's position to take on the Centre and the governor.

Satish Singh, a political analyst and former I-PAC member, said, "Mann was the commander-in-chief of AAP's campaign in Punjab. Had he faltered, there could have been murmurs of dissent. It was Mann's show and he had to ensure a decent performance."



Didi's Gambit To Ditch INDIA In WB, 'Go Ekla' Splits Votes In Her Favour

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■ **Dec 1984:** A young green-horn Congress worker from Kaliaghata — wearing a sari and hawai chappals — has just done the unbelievable, defeating CPM veteran Somnath Chatterjee from Jadavpur; the reddest of red citadels. Mamata Banerjee herself seems surprised and pundits attribute her victory to the sympathy wave that Congress benefited from after Indira Gandhi's assassination.



TMC's tally gives Mamata Banerjee more elbow room in INDIA bloc

■ **May 2024:** Mamata Banerjee is canvassing for votes at Jadavpur's Baro Bhooter Math (translated as the "ground belonging to a dozen ghosts"). She can work up the crowd to her will and asks for this seat once more so that she can help INDIA bloc in Lok Sabha, never mind that the alliance is not on in Bengal.

In a political career of five decades, Banerjee has proved her critics wrong multiple times. After a bruising

months-long campaign, with her party winning 29 seats in Bengal — its second-best Lok Sabha performance after 2014 when it won 34 — she has had the last laugh again. The tally has gone up substantially from 22 in 2019.

Leading the party with 108 public rallies and multiple road shows, one of which saw her walk 12km at a stretch on her south Kolkata home turf, Banerjee, 69, criss-crossed

from Coochbehar in the northernmost extreme to South 24 Parganas, where Bengal meets the Bay of Bengal. She went to Nandigram, where she lost in 2021 (a legal battle is still on over BJP's alleged electoral malpractices). And Sandeshkhali, where her partymen have been accused of rape and land-grab, before stinging videos threw up a counter-narrative of allegations being "BJP-engineered".

This journey, where PM Modi's campaign has tried to shift the burden of anti-incumbency to the state govt, was to reach the hearts of Bengal's women (through schemes like Lakshmi Bhandar) and its minorities (with about a quarter of the state's votes), even trying to establish Trinamool as a nativist party of the Bengali-Hindu majority through references to Durga Puja (now a Unesco-recognised "intangible cultural heritage") and the legacy of Swami Vivekananda.

Questioned for her decision to go solo, which had the potential to split traditional minority votes, Banerjee has been proven right — the community stood rock solid behind her. By splitting the Bengal battle into a three-way contest, Trinamool's gains outweigh its losses. In the close contests which went its way, Congress-Left vote shares were higher than Trinamool's victory margins, indicating a split in anti-Trina-

mool votes. Difference in vote share in 2024 between Trinamool and BJP has widened to 10%.

With a final tally of 29 seats — third highest among opposition parties in India (after Congress and SP) — it gains more elbow room in INDIA bloc. That Left-Congress barely scraped through with one seat in Bengal also vindicates a pre-poll offer by Banerjee for 2-3 seats. The results may settle the unease in the Congress-Trinamool relationship. Banerjee has already said she disapproves of the way CPM "monitors" Congress in INDIA bloc.

Finally, the Trinamool win sets up a lot of expectations. Most importantly, Banerjee has promised to ease the central fund flow into MGNREGA in Bengal. Her social schemes have been a defining factor. A weakened BJP at the Centre, and a stronger INDIA bloc, allows her to go beyond the anti-Centre pitch and get work done.



SAFETY BELT ON: If DMK rivals join hands, 2026 could be harder than 2021

that gave him a decisive lead in a triangular contest. Even after AIADMK, which he had dubbed "BJP's B team", quit NDA in Sept 2023, DMK kept criticising it for a "secret pact" with BJP. Stalin's message was clear: I am the supreme Dravidian commander against Hindutva. That was his USP.

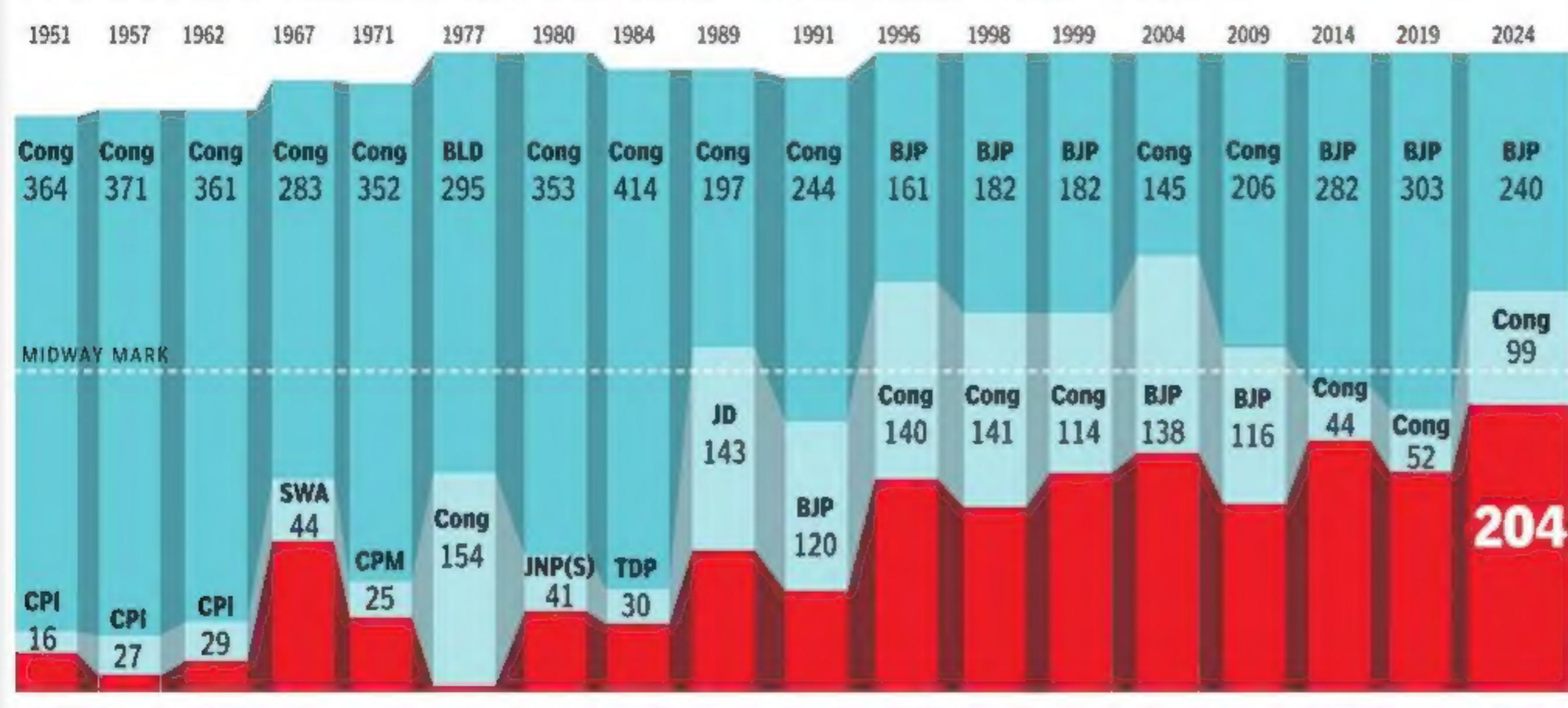
DMK benefited from a divided opposition. If its rivals (PMK included) choose to join hands, 2026 could be harder than 2021, when DMK won 133 of 234 assembly seats. The TN chief minister has his work cut out, especially with BJP gaining in vote share. BJP state president K Annamalai was able to set a narrative that the battle — in terms of optics and decibel levels — was between DMK and BJP. The Sta-

lin-Annamalai war of words was so shrill that AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami's criticism of Stalin — and at times BJP — was barely audible.

While he is DMK's undisputed leader at 71, Stalin will have to pass on the mantle sooner than later. The expected elevation of his son Udhayendhi as deputy CM may give more ammo to Stalin's detractors, but as long as DMK functionaries accept the rising son's ascent without a murmur, dynasty politics may not harm the party's electoral prospects. BJP, rising slowly as it is, may not be a disruptor in 2026 can trigger unexpected churns.

Regional Stars' Rising Graph

Congress and BJP have shared the mantle of the largest party in Lok Sabha since the first elections in 1951-52 with the only exception coming in 1977, when opposition parties had fought under the Bharatiya Lok Dal banner. The more visible change can be seen in the space that regional parties have wrested in Parliament, consistently proving to be the second largest bloc in the last few decades. It's a rise amply aided by the rut that Congress's found itself in amid BJP's onslaught



In 1967, strong showing by right-wing outfits — like Swatantra Party and Jana Sangh — put the spotlight on smaller players for the first time

A sweeping anti-Congress coalition in 1977 brought together several smaller regional outfits that managed to control Lok Sabha for a brief period

Led by SP, regional parties that were part of INDIA bloc cornered a fair chunk of seats. But the likes of BSP, BJD and YSRCP, which did not join any alliance, failed roundly as the 2024 results put the spotlight on the growing bipolarity of Indian politics

Results and leads as of 00.30pm

'Bhakti Aatma' stages a comeback, shows his nephew who's the real NCP

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Pune: Sharad Pawar's challengers will have to wait. The 83-year-old, who was ridiculed as a 'bhakti astma' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the campaign, has just licked them again in the toughest match of his career. Going into the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Pawar was fighting with one hand tied. His nephew Ajit had engineered a split in NCP, and walked away with the party's name, symbol and leading lights. With Ajit joining the BJP-led Mahayuti grouping, each seat had become a contest between Pawar's candidates and Prime Minister Modi.

Despite the headwinds, Pawar's NCP (SP) is set to win 8 of the 10 Lok Sabha seats it contested as part of the MVA alliance with Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT). This will be Pawar's best strike rate in an LS poll. His NCP's wins span the Mumbai region (Bhiwandi), western and central Maharashtra (Baramati, Madha and Shirur), Vidarbha (Wardha) and north Maharashtra (Dindori and Ahmednagar). Pawar has managed to make inroads in regions where NCP's support base was considered relatively weaker. In comparison, the rival NCP led by Ajit Pawar has won a lone seat in Raigad.



As a key member of INDIA bloc, the former Union minister and four-time chief minister was fighting the election simultaneously on different fronts, including in his backyard Baramati, where Ajit had challenged his supremacy by fielding his wife Sunetra against Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule. Many felt that the ageing Pawar would largely confine himself to Baramati and western Maharashtra to counter Ajit's immediate challenge, but he sur-

prised them with a busy tour. He attended over 50 rallies in over 40-degree heat and pegged away at rebuilding the organisation that Ajit had split.

With veterans like Chhagan Bhujbal and Dilip Walse Patil choosing to go with his nephew, Pawar didn't have easy picks either for the 10 seats his party contested. But he made up by poaching candidates from the rival NCP and BJP. Pawar's close associates say he enjoys nothing more

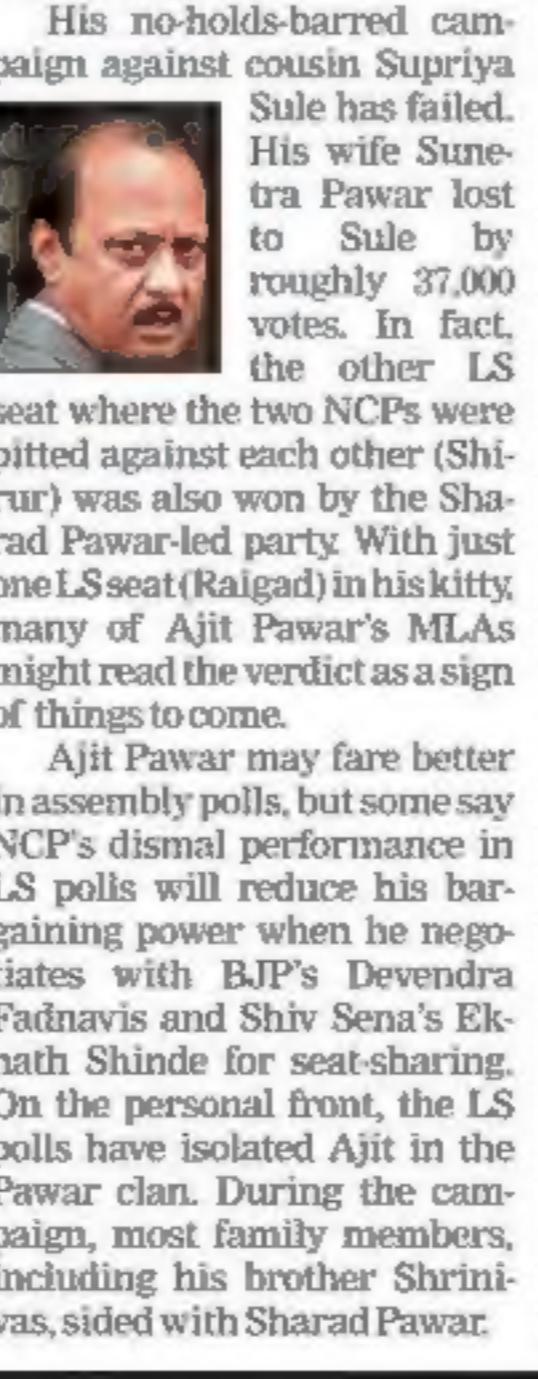
Uncertain road ahead for Ajit's NCP after lone LS poll victory

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Pune: This was the first electoral test for the two NCPs. But even with Supreme Court upholding the Election Commission's recognition of his group as the real NCP, Ajit Pawar has been unable to make it count in Lok Sabha polls.

His no-holds-barred campaign against cousin Supriya Sule has failed. His wife Sunetra Pawar lost to Sule by roughly 37,000 votes. In fact, the other LS seat where the two NCPs were pitted against each other (Shirur) was also won by the Sharad Pawar-led party. With just one LS seat (Raigad) in his kitty, many of Ajit Pawar's MLAs might read the verdict as a sign of things to come.

Ajit Pawar may fare better in assembly polls, but some say NCP's dismal performance in LS polls will reduce his bargaining power when he negotiates with BJP's Devendra Fadnavis and Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde for seat-sharing. On the personal front, the LS polls have isolated Ajit in the Pawar clan. During the campaign, most family members, including his brother Shrinivas, sided with Sharad Pawar.



Rebel Shinde holds ground despite 'sympathy wave'

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Mumbai: Maharashtra's ambitious and street-smart CM Eknath Shinde had shown time and again that he could not be written off. After being suppressed and passed over by Uddhav Thackeray, Shinde struck back by splitting Shiv Sena and taking it over. On allying with BJP to form the govt, he managed to wrest the top post, leaving a stunned Devendra Fadnavis to settle as his deputy. His direct proximity to the BJP brass in Delhi led to a sweet deal for the LS polls: 15 seats compared with four for BJP's other ally, NCP.

The verdict will bring vindication and relief. Having won 7 seats, Shinde's party has

a better strike rate than BJP in Maharashtra (which won 10 of the 28 seats it contested). The verdict may well mean he continues to hold his bargaining position and can lead the Mahayuti alliance ahead of state assembly polls due in Oct.

While the result has not shown that he is a claimant to the reins of the "real Shiv Sena", it may not exactly cause an exodus from Shinde's party towards the resurgent Shiv Sena (UBT) ahead of assembly polls. In the 13 direct contests with Sena (UBT), Shinde's party fared better in at least five — Buidhna, Hatkanangale, Kalyan, Maval, and Mumbai North

West. Thackeray's bruising campaign, pitching "loyalists" against "traitors", did not entirely work.

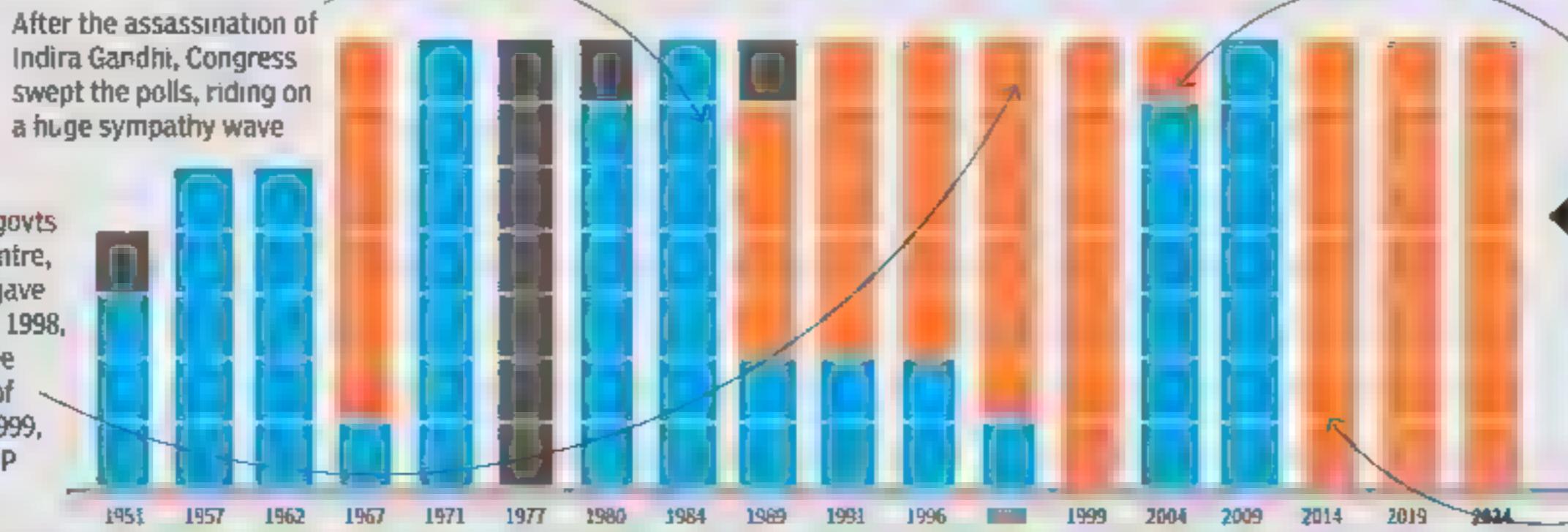
In Kalyan, his son Shrikant Shinde won by over 2 lakh votes, while in Thane his nominee Naresh Mhaske was leading by over 1.2 lakh votes. Shrikant Shinde won with a record margin. People have voted for the development work done by PM Modi in 10 years and our Maha yuti govt. Many seats were lost by a very thin margin and may be because the candidates were declared late. We will rethink these issues and rectify our mistakes," Shinde said.

For Shinde, having outperformed Ajit Pawar's NCP, he has now shown his party is BJP's more valuable ally.

Again, Delhi Goes To Biggest Party

Since 1998, the capital has unfailingly reflected the mood of the country. From farmers on the Yamuna floodplain and traders in Chandni Chowk to the movers and shakers of Lutyens' Delhi, its electorate defies classification. The trend suggests that whoever does well in Delhi goes on to form govt at the Centre

After coalition govs failed at the Centre, the electorate gave BJP a chance in 1998, but the Vajpayee govt lasted all of 13 months. In 1999, Delhi backed BJP all the way



The BJP-led NDA govt's campaign in 2004 was based on its 'India Shining' slogan, but failed to resonate with the electorate. The lone BJP winner in a flood of Congress blue was Vijay Kumar Malhotra, who had defeated Manmohan Singh in 1999 in the same constituency.

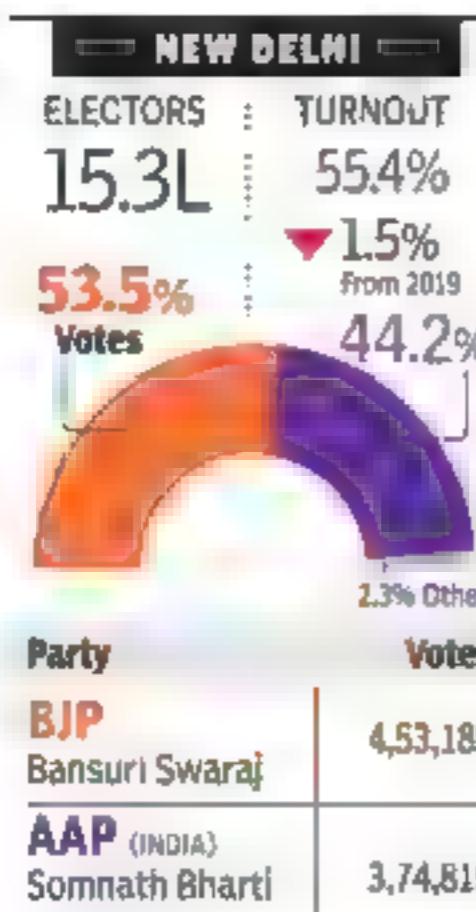
BJP was again the largest party in Lok Sabha though it fell short of majority on its own. Repeating its preference of 2014 and 2019, Delhi again stayed solidly behind the party

After two terms of UPA, Delhi voted for change and, sure enough, its overwhelming backing for BJP dovetailed with the party forming govt at the Centre in 2014. The capital stayed with the party in 2019 and Modi remained PM for a second straight term

Bansuri gets poll tune right

One of the most fascinating faceoffs in the capital saw AAP's three-time MLA Somnath Bharti tick horns with BJP's debutante Bansuri Swaraj, daughter of former Union minister, the late Sushma Swaraj.

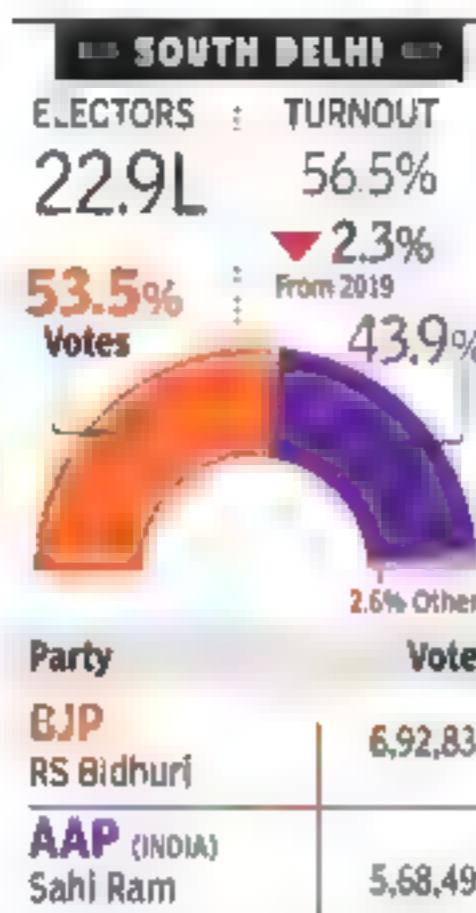
In a constituency that has returned political stalwarts like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani, Swaraj secured a win with a margin of 78,370 votes. During the initial rounds, the two candidates were engaged in a close battle, with Bansuri maintaining a lead of around 3,000 votes. The margin continued to widen with time. Interestingly, this was one of the few seats where a three-way contest was anticipated with BSP steering clear of INDIA bloc. BSP's candidate Raja, Kumar Anand, who dramatically resigned in April from AAP and as minister, could muster just 5,629 votes. Close to 5,000 NOTA votes were recorded. The constituency once again threw up a woman



victor, with Swaraj succeeding outgoing BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi. Swaraj, a lawyer by profession, entered active politics as co-convenor of Delhi BJP's legal cell last year and quickly rose to the position of secretary in the state unit.

Bidhuri has rival on the mat

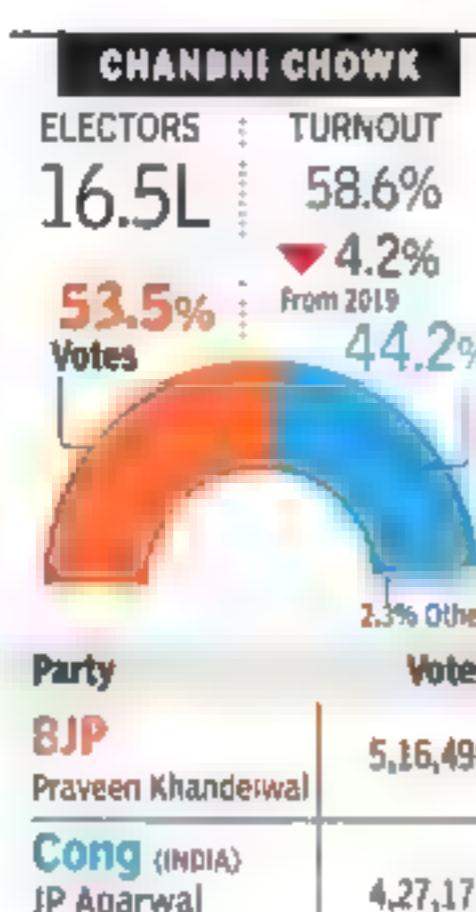
In an intense contest between two Gujarat MLAs, BJP's Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, the incumbent MLA from Badarpur and leader of opposition, secured a resounding victory with 6,92,832 votes. AAP's Sani Ram, a two-term MLA from Tughlaqabad, managed 5,68,499 votes. South Delhi parliamentary constituency, contrary to common belief, consists of not only affluent areas but also urban villages, unauthorised settlements, slums, luxurious farmhouses, resettlement colonies and a rural region close to Haryana border. Both contenders hail from rural parts of the constituency, which encompasses 10 assembly constituencies. Sani Ram held a lead of over 1,200 votes during the early trends. However, after 9am, Bidhuri overtook him, establishing a margin of 1,299 votes. As time passed, the gap widened significantly. By 11:30am, Bidhuri had surged ahead by more than 21,220 votes. Around 1pm, with the lead exceeding 66,000 votes,



the result was a foregone conclusion. While Sani Ram felt that BJP gained from a strong performance in Palam, Bawaliyan and Chhattarpur assembly constituencies, supporters of saffron parties conceded that AAP may have done well in Sangam Vihar and Tughlaqabad.

Upstart upstages old hand

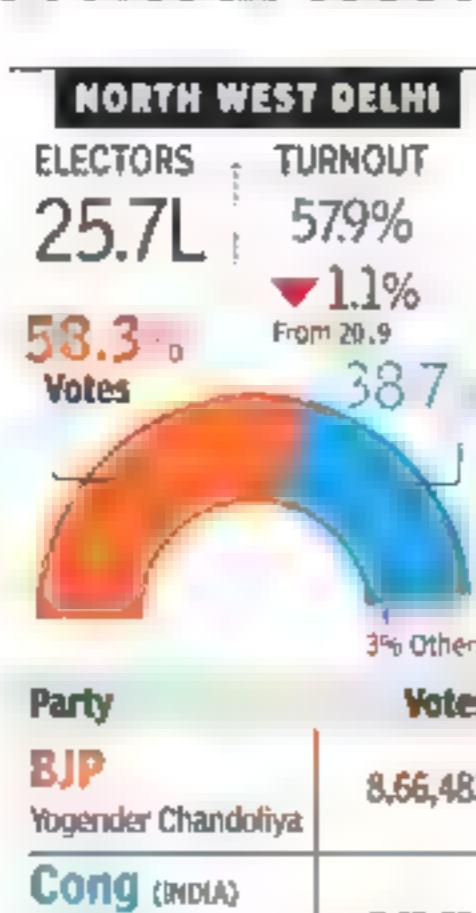
In his first Lok Sabha battle, Praveen Khandelwal emerged victorious for BJP, vanquishing his veteran Congress rival Jai Prakash Agarwal. A close contest had been expected but Khandelwal eventually secured the seat with a margin of 89,325 votes, despite a 2-lakh-strong Muslim electorate largely supporting the Congress after its alliance with AAP. The ding-dong battle saw Khandelwal leading by just a single vote in the second round. Congress, in the first three rounds, secured 26,965, 53,284 and 75,958 votes against 24,260, 49,476, and 74,915 for BJP. The tide turned in the fourth round when Khandelwal surged ahead, garnering 1,02,430 votes against 93,523 for Agarwal. After 15 rounds of counting around 2:30pm, Khandelwal had managed an efficient lead. The BJP candidate expressed satisfaction at the results. "Being a trader, my priority is to work for improvement of



markets, promotion of startups and striving to simplify GST," Khandelwal said. Agarwal, a 10-time parliamentary polls combatant, accepted the people's verdict and thanked his supporters.

BJP goes north in North West

Among the victorious BJP candidates in Delhi, Yogender Chandolia, contesting the North West Delhi seat, had the highest winning margin. As a first-time Lok Sabha contestant, Chandolia's impressive performance underscored his party's hold on the constituency, which also has a BJP MLA representing Rohini. Chandolia's dominance was evident from the early rounds of counting. By round 3, he had totalled 11,778 votes, while Udit Raj of Congress, an earlier MP from the same seat, had received 5,332 votes. By noon, Chandolia's kitty had 1,99,743 votes and his rival's, 81,831. Eventually, the gap became a yawning 2.9 lakh that couldn't be closed. "We will fulfil the promises we made during campaigning," said Chandolia. "I thank the people for giving BJP such a huge vote share. There are problems in the areas here like lack of



connectivity, poor water quality and lack of sports facilities. Along with them, we will also take up the construction of an underpass in Kiran and rejuvenation of waterbodies."

AAPEal diminished, Kejriwal's troubles mount

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of significance in the INDIA alliance. The party's bargaining power in INDIA alliance will be considerably weakened with more powerful regional satraps calling the shots.

It can, however, take solace from the fact that with NDA's tally reduced, and BJP doing introspection, its mascot can expect some respite from central agencies. However, if Kejriwal insists on continuing as CM while in jail, he has to contend with the possibility of Central rule being imposed and assembly polls being called for earlier than Feb next year when the AAP completes five years.

The slogan of "jail ka jawab vote se" didn't yield a mandate for the party. The poll results also show that Kejriwal's 'Delhi model of development' and its projection in Punjab, where it had swept the assembly polls in 2022, did not impress the electorate enough to choose AAP over BJP and Congress.

AAP had joined politics promising an "alternative" to traditional parties like BJP and Congress, calling them

corrupt. When it struck an alliance with Congress, it did not sit well with voters who saw it as an opportunistic move.

The argument that AAP had joined INDIA in order to defeat a dictatorial dispensation

at the Centre seems to have been lost on the electorate.

The party, which had secured an impressive victory in Punjab assembly polls in 2022, getting catapulted into the limelight as a party that

could be a national player of significance, failed to perform in the state winning just 3 seats – Sangrur, Anandpur Sahib and Hoshiarpur. Congress got 7 out of 13. Significantly, both AAP and Cong

ress had agreed not to fight in an alliance in the face of resistance from state units who felt going separately would work better. That clearly worked for Congress, leaving AAP high and dry.

As part of the INDIA alliance, AAP and Congress were also in the poll fray jointly in Gujarat. AAP contested in two constituencies – Bharuch and Bhavnagar – with the former being the home turf of later Congress stalwart Ahmed Patel. Congress has won one out of the 24 seats it contested. BJP bagged 25 out of 26. AAP drew a blank.

Besides, AAP also lost Kurukshetra to BJP while Congress, which fought on 9 seats in Haryana, won 5. Kejriwal's party was also defeated in two constituencies in Assam.

With Kejriwal seen as the face of AAP in Delhi and beyond, with no other person to take over reins of the party and govt in sight yet, the way forward for his party will be determined by how long he remains in jail and how far he is able to run the show from inside while keeping his flock together.

Ctrl+Alt+Delhi: Alliance Finds Zero Bandwidth

BJP Continues Dominance, But Margins Of Win Come Down

Alternating Currents In Delhi Polling Booths

The birth of AAP and rise of Modi's BJP has seen voters in Delhi swing between either camp, favouring the Kejriwal-led party in the assembly and going with the saffron party in Parliament



candidates, where former North Delhi Municipal Corporation (pre-merger) mayor Yogendra Chaudhary defeated Congress' Udit Raj by over 2.9 lakh votes. The 2019 election had also seen BJP securing its biggest victory from the same constituency.

In West Delhi, BJP's Kamaljeet Sehrawat defeated his nearest rival, AAP's Mahabali Mishra, by a margin of 2 lakh votes. A former Congress MP, Mishra had lost the last two Lok Sabha elections from West Delhi before joining AAP in 2022.

Making her electoral debut, BJP stalwart Sushma Swaraj's daughter, Bansuri, defeated AAP's three-time MLA Somnath Bharti in New Delhi by a margin of about 38,370 votes.

The party's biggest victory, however, came from North West Delhi, the constituency reserved for scheduled caste

BJP a few anxious moments initially was Chandni Chowk where Congress' Jai Prakash Agarwal, a veteran of several elections, was pitted against BJP's Praveen Khandelwal. Agarwal maintained a narrow lead in the first few rounds but lost to Khandelwal by over 89,325 votes.

AAP and Congress had sought votes to "save Constitution and democracy" and raised unemployment and inflation as major poll issues. AAP had even turned the election into a referendum on the arrest of party chief and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal.

"Unlike states like UP and Bihar where youths were unhappy about not getting govt jobs, it was not an issue in Delhi," explained Ravi Ranjan, a professor of political science in Delhi University. "Being a metropolitan city, the issues for the citizens of Delhi are different and the results reflect that."

Political scientist Manoj Sinha said the credentials of AAP had become suspect in the run-up to the elections. "AAP was born out of a movement against corruption. It had attacked Congress, accusing it of corruption and replacing it in the capital," said Sinha. His alliance with the same party exposed it to criticism.

The Congress cadres were reluctant allies of AAP and the party's choice of candidates and campaigning had got delayed.

Fielding of "outsiders"

like Udit Raj and Kanhaiya Kumar also led to resentment within the party. Rahul Gandhi held three rallies in Delhi, one in each constituency where the party was contesting, but not many senior party functionaries turned up for campaigning.

Both Congress and AAP

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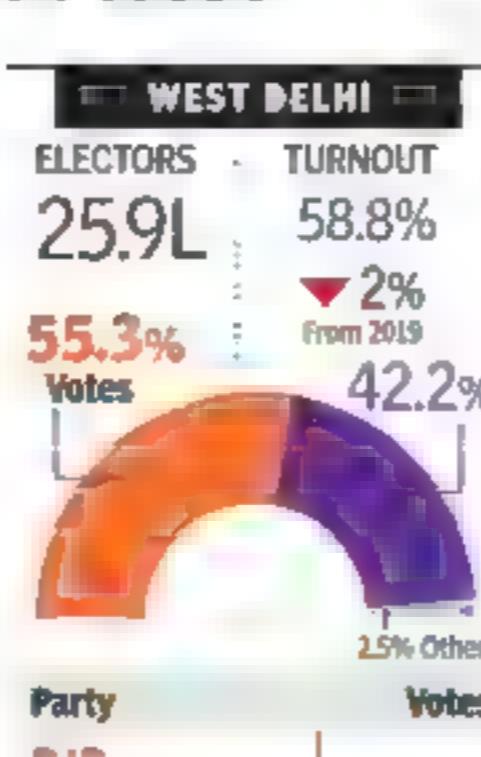
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No wild swings in West

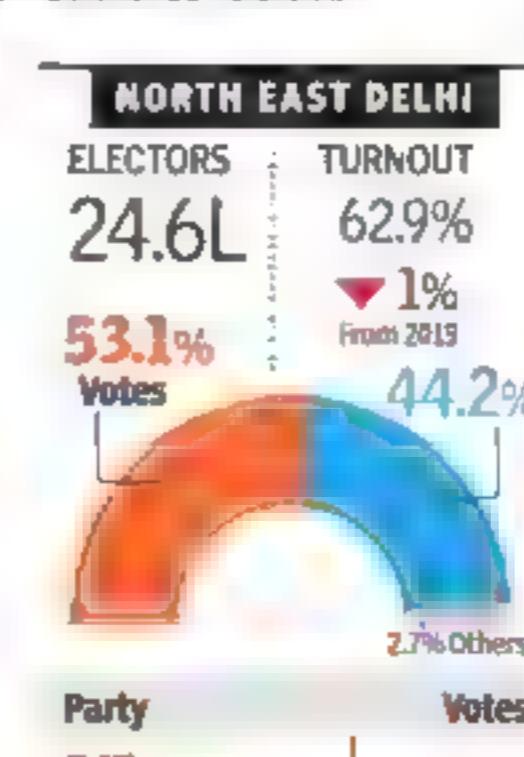
BJP's Kamaljeet Sehrawat is poised to become a first-time MP after securing a resounding victory over AAP's Mahabali Mishra. Sehrawat, who contested the Lok Sabha election for the first time, garnered 8,42,658 votes, while Mishra, a former MP and three-time MLA from Congress, managed 6,43,645. BSP's Vishak was third with 7,824 votes. Sehrawat, who previously served as mayor of the erstwhile south corporation in 2017, currently represents one of the wards in Dwarka after her victory in the 2022 municipal election. While it was a close battle in Madhipur and Tilak Nagar, Sehrawat's vote share remained high in Janakpuri, Vikaspuri, Uttam Nagar, Hauz Khas, Rajouri Garden, Dwarka, Matala and Nafisgarh, helping her maintain a healthy lead all through West Delhi, the largest parliamentary constituency in the city, encompassing a diverse range of



demographics and geographies, from the affluent neighbourhood of Dwarka to bustling Rajouri market, remote villages bordering Haryana and colonies inhabited by lower middle class.

Tiwari coasts to third win

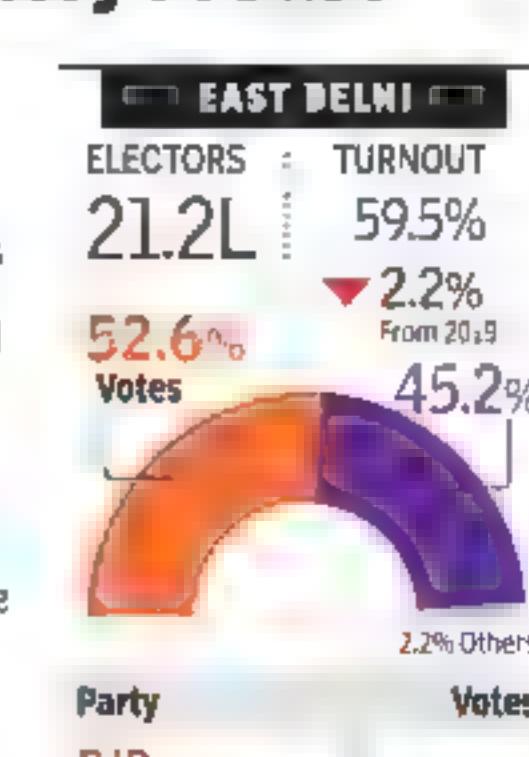
Manoj Tiwari recorded a personal hat-trick from the North East Delhi constituency, whizzing past his Congress rival, former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar. The BJP winner went into a big lead from the outset of the counting and kept the momentum going with each round. The contest in North East Delhi was slated to be keen because of the significant Poornchanchi population. Both Tiwari and Kumar are from that community. The large Muslim electorate was expected to be advantageous to Congress. By 2pm on Tuesday, however, Kumar lagged Tiwari by over one lakh votes. Around 7:30pm, BJP had stretched its lead to a shade under 1.4 lakh, with 8,28,121 votes in Tiwari's kitty against 6,81,121 for Kumar. "I would like to thank PM Narendra Modi for this win," said Tiwari. "I also feel blessed to have received the support of



voters in my constituency. No doubt the responsibility has increased as BJP is ahead in all seven seats in Delhi. BJP means service. We will keep serving the people."

A see-saw victory in East

BJP's decision to replace incumbent MP Gautam Gambhir with former mayor Harsh Malhotra paid rich dividends as he defeated AAP's Kuldeep Kumar by a margin of 93,663 votes. Malhotra sprinted ahead of his rival in the first round itself, gaining a lead of 9,045 votes. However, there were some tense moments for him in the fifth round when his lead came down to just 125. The tremors didn't last long, though. By the 17th round, Malhotra's victory was near certain as his lead mounted to 83,821 votes, with the BJP candidate appearing to do well in Okhla, Gandhi Nagar, Jangpura, Krishna Nagar, Shahdara, Vishwas Nagar, Laxmi Nagar, Trilokpuri, Konoli and Patparganj. Malhotra later conveyed his gratitude to the Delhi voters and attributed the party's victory in all seats to its "accomplishments" over the past decade. Kumar, MLA from



Konoli assembly constituency, acknowledged that the ultimate power lay with the public and said the party would analyse the factors that led to the unfavourable result.

Meet
Your
MPs

CHANDNI CHOWK

Praveen Khandelwal
BJP
WON BY 89,325 VOTES
DEFEATING Jai Prakash Agarwal CONG/INDIA

NORTH EAST DELHI

Manoj Tiwari
BJP
WON BY 1,38,778 VOTES
DEFEATING Kanhaiya Kumar CONG/INDIA

NORTH WEST DELHI

Yogender Chandoliya
BJP
WON BY 2,90,849 VOTES
DEFEATING Udit Raj CONG/INDIA

NEW DELHI

Bansuri Swaraj
BJP
WON BY 78,370 VOTES
DEFEATING Somnath Bharti AAP/INDIA

EAST DELHI

Harsh Deep Malhotra
BJP
WON BY 93,663 VOTES
DEFEATING Kuldeep Kumar AAP/INDIA

New Tricks Needed Despite Hat-Trick

No Clear CM Face, Poor MCD Track Record And Over-Reliance On Modi BJP's Weak Points

Abhinav.Rajput
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New Delhi: Unlike the trend of BJP loosening its hold on several states it had swept in 2019, the party again held Delhi in a vice-like grip winning all the seven seats for the third consecutive general elections. And like in the elections of 2019, BJP's vote share was over 50% this year.

The saffron party's Ramvir Singh Bishnu won in South Delhi, Yogender Chandoliya in North-West Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj in New Delhi, Harsh Malhotra in East Delhi, Kamaljeet Sehrawat in West Delhi, Praveen Khandelwal in Chandni Chowk and Manoj Tiwari in North-East Delhi.

Except for Tiwari, the party had put up fresh candidates this year; and BJP city seniors said this helped counter anti-

incumbency and keep the cadres motivated. "When you are able to convince the electorate that your party is forming the govt at the centre, the fence-sitters also emerge in your support," explained a senior functionary.

Delhi BJP unit president Virinder Sachdeva said, "The people of the capital gave us this mandate for the works done by PM Narendra Modi for Delhi and for his visionary leadership." Party functionaries said that the campaign had been decided months in advance to centre on two talking points—the performance of PM Modi and the corruption allegations against AAP, including about the excise policy, renovation of the CM's house and financial discrepancies in Delhi Jal Board.

"AAP is no longer the par-



NOT SO STRAIGHT FORWARD? The challenge for BJP is to replicate LS win in assembly polls next year and nip factionalism in the bud

ty seen as a group of honest people with noble intentions. The liquor policy has exposed them and three of their top leaders are in jail on corruption charges with the co-

urts refusing to grant them bail," said Sachdeva.

With the Lok Sabha polls wrapped up, BJP anticipates the resounding win to provide it the impetus it needs for

the assembly elections eight months away. The party has encountered obstacles in the previous assembly polls, winning, respectively, just three and eight seats in 2015 and 2020, despite sweeping the stakes in the two Lok Sabha elections held a year prior to each in 2014 and 2019.

BJP insiders, therefore, feel the 2020 assembly polls could similarly prove arduous due not only to the absence of a compelling narrative to counter AAP's populist policy but also because of factionalism within the state unit.

A party functionary admitted that BJP, which last formed the government in Delhi in 1993, lacked a charismatic figure to rival Arvind Kejriwal. He also conceded an overreliance on the Modi factor and this places them at a disadvantage in state and

local polls. This was one of the reasons AAP was able to wrest control of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi from BJP in 2022.

The clean sweep will result in a larger share of development projects for the city. BJP functionaries hoped

One of them said, "With BJP also forming the govt at the Centre, Delhi can again expect a larger share of development funds as it has been doing. Delhi is the first state in the country that got the regional rapid rail besides the Delhi-Bombay, Delhi-Dehradun and Saharanpur expressways," he said, adding, "You can expect more such projects. There is also a huge demand for the expansion of Delhi Metro to the fringes of the city and we have committed to our voters that we would accomplish this."

Photo: Rakesh Mehta



Wind, water and noise

Counting for the Chandni Chowk seat at Bharat Nagar (Ashok Vihar) wasn't done in the most salubrious of environments. The fans seemed to have been placed at an unsuitable height, causing the blades to hit the temporary pillars and create a disruptive din. Water so constantly leaked from the AC units

Paper chase

Election officials at the Chandni Chowk constituency had to fall back on the old-world paper votes after an EVM developed technical problems and delayed the counting process. BJP and Congress polling agents demanded immediate rectification, forcing the officials to count the VVPAT slips

Going with the trend

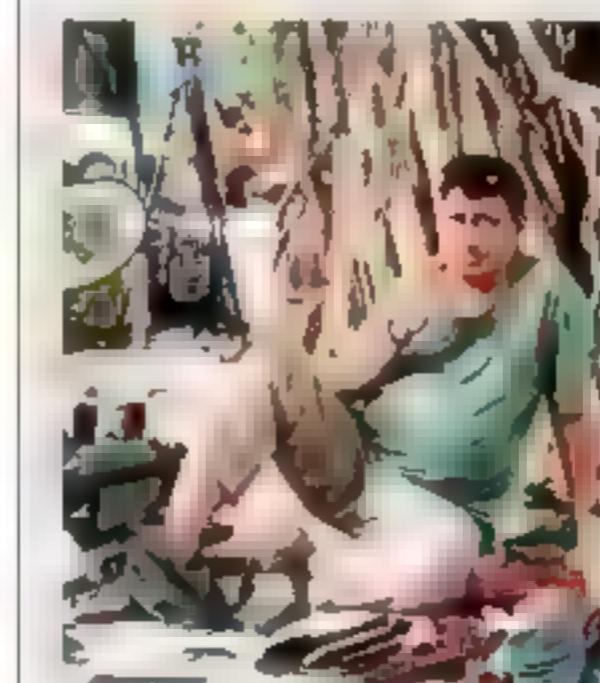
Loud dhols beats resounded at the BJP state office on Pandit Pant Marg after early results indicated a BJP lead in Delhi. Around midday, however, there was a pause because the national results provided room for circumspection. The drummers picked up again after a more definitive uptick in the national trend for the saffron party

Photo: Jatin Kumar



Brotherhood of also-rans

'Haare hum, par mann se nahi haare (we lost the poll, not our spirit)', quipped a group of independent candidates during the counting in the South Delhi constituency. Among them were Chandrashekhar Singh Kushwaha who got 1,889 votes, Deepak Kapila (1,500), Ram Gopal (3,958), Arun Kumar (842), Shanker Dey (522), Poonam Srivastava (958) and B. Hanif Jaiandhari (514).



Sole searching

Right outside the New Delhi counting centre in Gole Market, cobbler Suresh sat under the shade of a banyan tree. Unlike others, he didn't seem remotely interested in the results of the polls. The 45-year-old Rajasthan migrant doily said, 'A change of political party changes only the lives of the rich.'

NOT A vote-hungry candidate

In North East Delhi, Ravi Kiran Thilak Thakurka, an independent candidate, was at the counting centre more to find out how many had opted for NOTA than voted for him. His campaign had been to discourage NOTA voting and he had distributed T-shirts bearing that message. 'NOTA is a hoax. We have to make our voices heard,' he smiled

Driving pleasure

Till 4pm, the Samaypur Badli road in North West Delhi constituency was almost empty, with only a few grocery shops operating. And while the road was barricaded since it led to the counting centre at Delhi Technological University, other streets going to and away from Rohini were unusually clear of the regular traffic jams



Business as unusual

The Night Cafe on the DTU campus is usually crammed with students. Business was lean after the university closed for vacations on May 25. On Tuesday, however, the till rang as party workers, poll officials and security personnel made a beeline for it since it was the only place they could find refreshments

Cong needs gust to convert winds of change into wave

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New Delhi: The Congress party's hopes of regaining lost ground in the national capital were tied to the Lok Sabha election, as they have been unable to win the Vidhan Sabha for a decade and the corporation for 17 years. However, the party failed to secure any seats in Delhi for the third consecutive time, this time in an alliance with AAP this time.

While Kanhaiya Kumar lost North East Delhi's seat to Manoj Tiwari, Udit Raj was defeated by Yogender Chandoliya (North West). JP Agarwal failed to best Praveen Khandelwal in Chandni Chowk.

This defeat marks a significant blow for Congress which had traditionally dominated Delhi's political scene, often sweeping all the seats in previous Lok Sabha elections prior to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's era at the Centre.

Several factors contributed to the party's campaign struggles, including the late announcement of candidates compared to AAP and BJP's the defection of state president Arvinder Singh Lovely to BJP just weeks before the polls and the inability to motivate cadres and unite different factions within the party.

The lack of a strong grassroots structure and the absence of charismatic leaders also hindered the party's chances. In such elections where



WAY TO GO? A jubilant Congress supporter at AICC headquarters

there are only two blocks (BJP and IND) alliance, the contest becomes close. Had we managed these issues, then we could have dented BJP in some seats," said a senior Congress functionary. The vote percentage difference between Congress and BJP candidates was around 9% in the closely contested Chandni Chowk and North East Delhi constituencies.

However, Congress functionary Abhishek Dutt emphasised the party's good performance in several seats, which he believes could serve as a model for the party to revive its fortunes in Delhi. "We have done well in several states and have stopped BJP from the magic number of 272. This was possible because we raised issues that affect the common people such as unemployment and price rise... youths are upset with the

way their jobs are being snatched in the name of schemes like Aam Aadmi," he said.

Dutt expressed optimism in using the same model in Delhi to bring back the party's glory days. "We will do a sustained campaign in Delhi like we did in Telangana and Karnataka," he said.

Senior party members, meanwhile, cautioned that if Congress didn't take decisive action, it might encounter even greater difficulties in the upcoming Vidhan Sabha polls in Feb next year. They stressed the importance of the party reassessing its strategy, bringing in fresh leadership and launching campaigns focused on issues directly impacting the lives of the people.

Party functionaries expect that the upcoming Vidhan Sabha polls will likely see BJP, AAP and Congress fighting independently.

In game of thorns, AAP must keep flock together

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New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party is now facing an existential crisis. The party, which formed govt in Delhi thrice in the past 11 years and expanded its footprints in some other states showcasing the "Delhi model of governance", couldn't claim even one seat in the Lok Sabha elections despite a seat-sharing arrangement with Congress.

With the assembly polls in the capital a few months away and its three top leaders—Kejriwal, former deputy CM Manish Sisodia and former health minister Satendar Jain in jail, the beleaguered party faces the challenge of both running the govt for the full term and preparing for a crucial state election.

Kejriwal's arrest in the money laundering case linked

to the now scrapped excise policy a week after announcement of the Lok Sabha poll schedule forced the party to launch a campaign with the slogan, "Jail ka jawab vote se", to generate a sympathy wave. The Delhi CM's personal appeal on these lines, however, failed to move the voters enough.

Political scientist and JNU professor Neera Chandhoke said the charges of corruption against Kejriwal and his senior party colleagues have badly dented AAP's image. "Also, Kejriwal has failed to strengthen AAP's organisational structure and it has largely remained a one leader party," she said.

Questioning AAP's alliance with Congress, she added: "I am not sure if the alliance actually worked on the ground and Congress and

file photo



HEADWINDS AT DOORSTEPS: AAP failed to step up to the challenge

AAP workers voted for each other's candidates in their respective constituencies.

With its vulnerabilities exposed, the party faces the huge challenge of keeping its flock together. The threat can come from both BJP and a resurgent Congress. Senior functionaries of both parties have claimed in private that many legislators and municipal councillors of Kejriwal's party are willing to jump ship.

If Kejriwal doesn't step down from CM's post despite being in jail, governance will suffer besides the Centre getting an opportunity to impose Central rule if it feels there would be dividends. Whether a replacement—it be Kejriwal's wife, Sunita, or someone else

can be effective is a hypothetical question at this time.

AAP's Delhi state convenor, Gopal Rai, said they fought this election in most adverse circumstances. "AAP gave a tough fight to BJP in Delhi with its rock-solid unity. BJP's margin is going to reduce on a big scale," he said.

Meanwhile, AAP has called for PM Narendra Modi's resignation, asserting that the LS election results reflected a clear mandate against BJP's politics of "hairst and dictatorship".

"People have voted to save Baba Saheb's Constitution. They have voted to save the reservation system in the country, which is for the Dalits, deprived, exploited, backward and tribal," Singh said.

Muslim vote fails to swing it for alliance in Delhi

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New Delhi: Mehfooz Alam, a 35-year-old real estate professional from New Delhi, closely followed the election results all day. However, he was left disappointed as the AAP-Congress alliance failed to secure a single seat in Delhi.

"It seems that our votes didn't count much. In Lok Sabha election, the community has limited influence in a direct contest against BJP. We are disappointed with the false promises of BJP spreading hate and community divide. However, we are hopeful in the upcoming assembly polls," Alam said.

According to the 2011 Census, Muslims constitute around 12.9% of Delhi's population. As per political estimates, North East Lok Sabha constituency currently has the highest percentage of Muslim voters at 20.7%, while other constituencies also have a significant Muslim population: Chandni Chowk (14%), East Delhi (16.8%), New Delhi (16.8%), North West Delhi (10.6%), South Delhi (7%), and West Delhi (6.8%).

North East constituency recorded the highest voting percentage at 58.3%, with three predominantly Muslim-inhabited assembly constituencies—Seelampur, Mustafabad, and Babarpur—each seeing a voting percentage of over 65%. However, Congress candidate Kanhaiya

Kumar lost the seat by a margin of over 1.3 lakh votes.

Mohd Mushtaq from Joharipur said the public's choice leaned more towards BJP Adnan Zain, a trader in Nand Nagri, added, "The problem with Kanhaiya Kumar is that he did not visit the people on the ground as he should have. Giving passionate speeches online for impact is not enough. Having an interpersonal connection with the people you are representing is important."

Sami, a car service provider from northeast Delhi, said, "Those who voted in favour of BJP did not

do so for the goodwill of Manoj Tiwari, as he has barely done any work; it's because of Modi's brand appeal." He expressed hope that Tiwari would address issues like mosquitos, waste management and drinking water in his third term.

Other influential Muslim-domi-

nated areas in Delhi include Chandni Chowk, Matia Mahal and Ballimaran assembly constituencies in Chandni Chowk. Lok Sabha constituency which recorded voting percentages of 56.8%, 67.20%, and 64.7%, respectively. In East Delhi constituency, Okhla, a Muslim-dominated area, recorded a voting percentage of 52.2%.

Many minority community members attributed the impact on results to the lower voting percentage in Delhi vis-à-vis the 2019 and 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Sarum Ullah, a shopkeeper in Ballimaran, said that due to the blistering heat, many women did not step out to cast their votes.

S Khan, a local from Matia Mahal, said that safety and security were the primary concerns for voters in his neighbourhood. "We wanted a govt that treats everyone equally, besides providing security. The results were a setback for us, but I think if the voting percentage had been high, then Congress would have won the seat easily," he said.

In East Delhi constituency Naseem, a 33-year-old resident, hoped for the AAP candidate to win, citing the party's work in providing free bus rides for women and water and electricity for all. Shareef Ahmad, a resident of Govindpuri in south Delhi, said the candidates who won had the support of the public and that INDIA bloc gave a tough fight to BJP across the country.



LEFT DISAPPOINTED: Muslim voters showed up, but it didn't show up in Delhi's results

With inputs for stories from Anuja Jaiswal, Kushagra Dixit, Siddhanta Mishra, Ridhima Gupta and Shreya Ghosh

WEST DELHI

Kamaljeet Sehrawat

WON BY
1,99,013
VOTESDEFEATING
Mahabali
Mishra
AAP

SOUTH DELHI

Ramvir Singh Bidhuri

WON BY
1,24,333
VOTESDEFEATING
Sahi Ram
AAP

GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR

Mahesh Sharma

WON BY
5,59,472
VOTESDEFEATING
Mahendra
Singh Nagar
SP/INDIA

GHAZIABAD

Atul Garg

WON BY
3,36,965
VOTESDEFEATING
Dolly Sharma
CONG/INDIA

FARIDABAD

Krishan Pal Gurjar

WON BY
1,72,914
VOTESDEFEATING
Mahendra
Pratap Singh
CONG/INDIA

GURGAON

Rao Inderjit Singh

WON BY
75,079
VOTESDEFEATING
Raj Babbar
CONG/INDIA

DANCE of DEMOCRACY | HOME GROUND

Margins Go South, But South Hry Stays With BJP

Inderjit hits super six in Gurgaon, beats Raj Babbar in close contest

Cong wins 5 seats; farmers' discontent and Agnipath take a toll on BJP's tally

RaoJaswantSingh
@t mesgroup.com

NARROWING GAP: Inderjit secured 75,079 votes more than his rival

Gurgaon: After a suspense that stretched well into the afternoon, BJP's Rao Inderjit Singh defeated his nearest rival – actor-politician Raj Babbar of Congress by more than 75,000 votes.

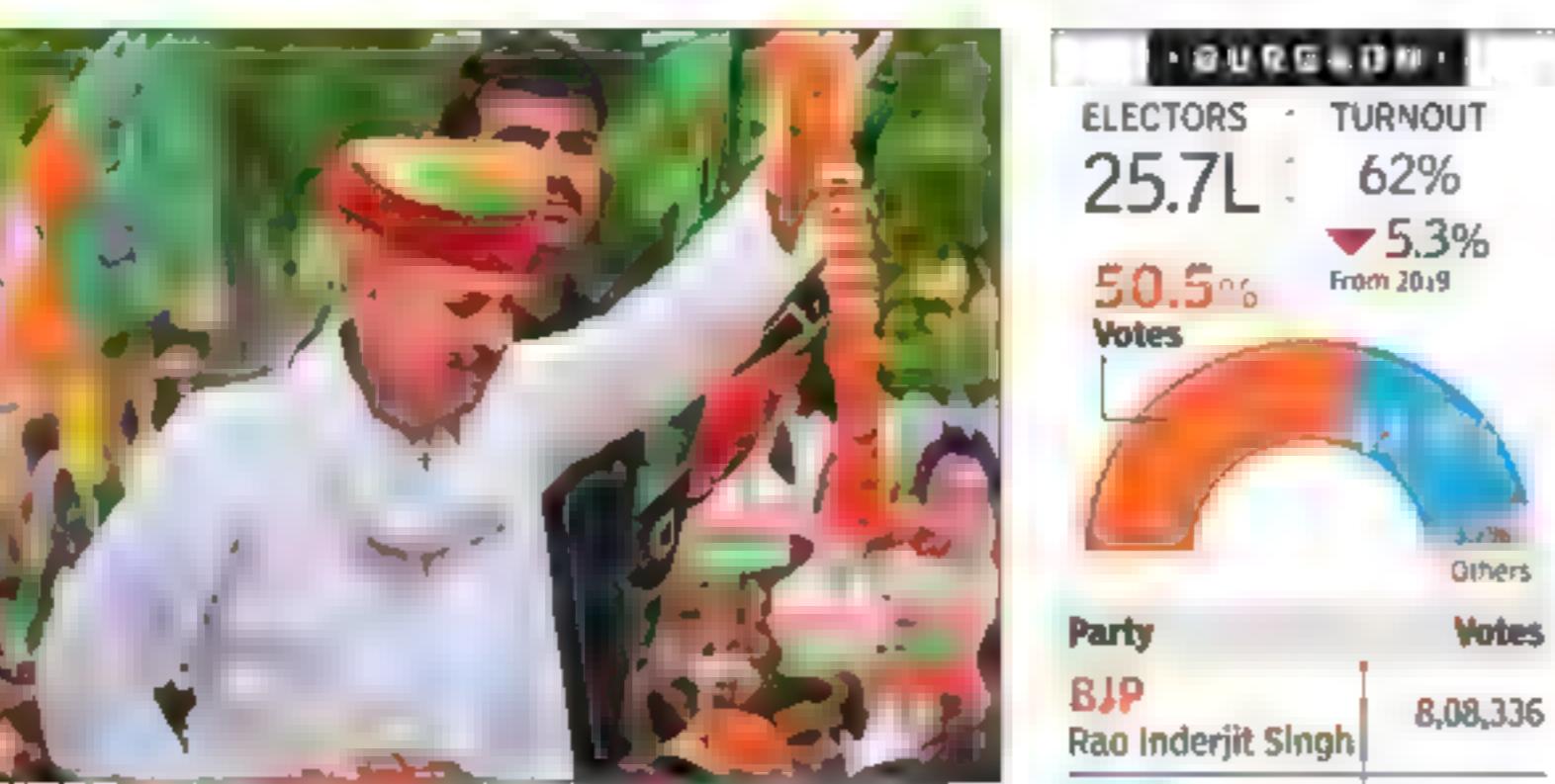
This marked his sixth win as MP and fourth from Gurgaon since it became a Lok Sabha seat in 2008. His victory margin, however, came down drastically from 4 lakh in 2019. The day began with the numbers inclined towards Babbar. The Congress candidate maintained a steady lead of 30,000-40,000 till 2pm, after which the tables turned towards Rao Inderjit. By the end of the day, the BJP veteran had secured 75,079 votes more than his rival!

Of the 16 lakh-odd votes that were polled in Gurgaon, Rao Inderjit bagged over 8 lakh while Babbar had 7.1 lakh votes in his kitty. Officials said the Congress candidate took the lead in the morning as votes from Nuh were counted first. Babbar maintained a lead for 8 hours straight as he bagged a majority of votes from the three assembly constituencies of Nuh-Punhiana, Faridpur Jhurka and Nuh.

In the morning, when Babbar was leading by around 40,000 votes, he said in Rewari, "This is a decision of the people. And it's the people who are leading."

BJP's Gurjar makes it a three-peat in FaridabadVishakha.Chaman
@t mesgroup.com**Faridabad:** BJP candidate Krishan Pal Gurjar secured a third consecutive victory in the Lok Sabha elections, defeating Mahender Pratap Singh of Congress by a margin of 1,72,914 votes. From the outset, Gurjar maintained a steady lead throughout the counting process, emerging victorious with a total of 7,88,569 votes, while his main rival Singh secured 6,15,655 votes, which accounted for 41.8% of the total votes cast.

However, compared to his resounding victory in 2019 – when he won by 6,38,239 votes – the incumbent MP's winning margin witnessed a significant decline. His vote share dropped from an impressive 68.6% in



Bagish.Jha@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: BJP lost considerable ground in the state – failing to replicate its performance in 2014 and 2019, when it bagged all 10 seats – but managed to hold on to the three south Haryana constituencies of Gurgaon, Faridabad, and Bhindranwara.

Congress gave BJP a tough fight, winning 5 seats – Rohat, Hisar, Sirsa, Ambala and Sonipat. Apart from the three seats in the south, BJP secured Karnal and Kurukshetra in the north.

While BJP managed to retain the three south Haryana seats, its victory margin nose-dived. Rao Inderjit Singh of BJP defeated Congress candidate Raj Babbar by 75,079 votes in Gurgaon. In 2019, Rao Inderjit had trounced Congress's Ajay Singh Yadav by 3 lakh votes.

In Bhindranwara, Mahendra Singh, Chaudhary Dharambir Singh won against Congress's Rao Dan Singh by 41,510 votes. In 2019, he had won by a margin of 4.1 lakh votes against Congress rival Shrikrishna Chandhary.

In Faridabad, Krishan Pal Gurjar won by more than 1.7 lakh votes against Mahender Pratap Singh of Congress. In the last election, Gurjar had defeated Congress's Avtar Singh Bhadana by 6.1 lakh votes.

Despite an apparent dis-



content against local MPs, BJP had decided to go ahead with old-timers in south Haryana.

Rao Inderjit from Gurgaon, Gurjar in Faridabad, and Dharambir Singh from Bhindranwara. They were among 4 sitting MPs across the state on whom the party had

this time?

Sources in the party admitted there was a discontent among people against the state govt, particularly among farmers and members of the Jat community.

Yes, farmers and rural voters drifted away from the party, but those in urban areas aligned with us. Urban voters played a big role in BJP's win in Gurgaon and Faridabad," said a BJP functionary.

Agnipath, the govt's short-term Army recruitment scheme that left many youths unhappy because of the re-

duced job tenure, also had an impact on the results.

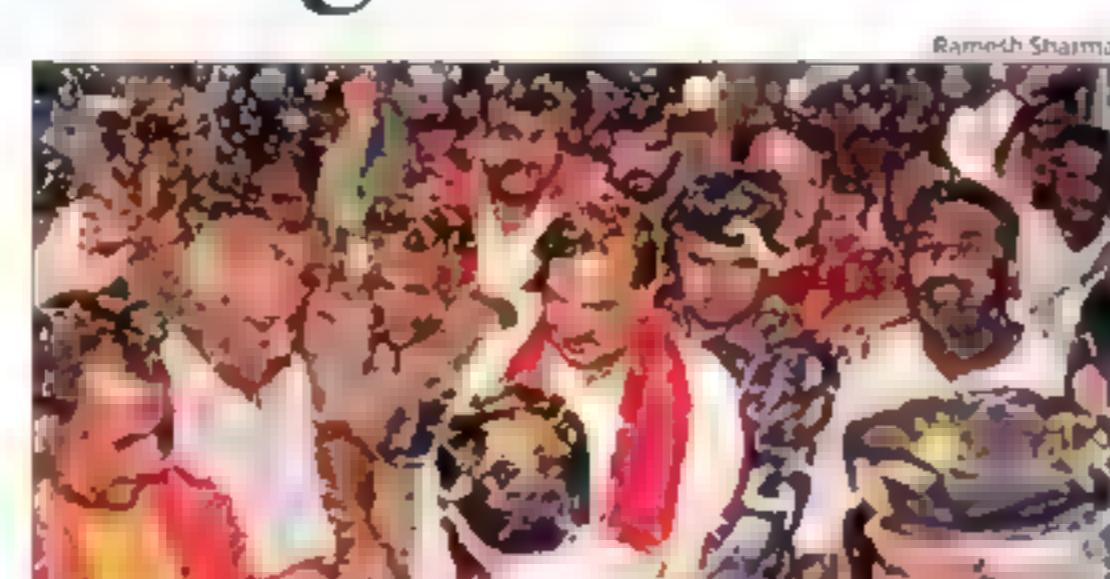
In Kosi – which is in Rewari but part of the Rohtak Lok Sabha seat – Congress bagged a lead of a few thousand votes this time. In 2019, Kosi had voted overwhelmingly for BJP.

Arvind Singh, the media in charge of BJP in the state, accused the opposition parties of spreading a false narrative against the govt.

"Despite all of this, we retained half the seats after being in power for 10 years," he added.

BJP GAINS IN NCR EVEN AS PARTY LOSES GRIP IN UP

It's a hat-trick for Sharma in GB Nagar, victory margin of 5.6L biggest in state



IT GETS BETTER: Mahesh Sharma meets supporters after the win

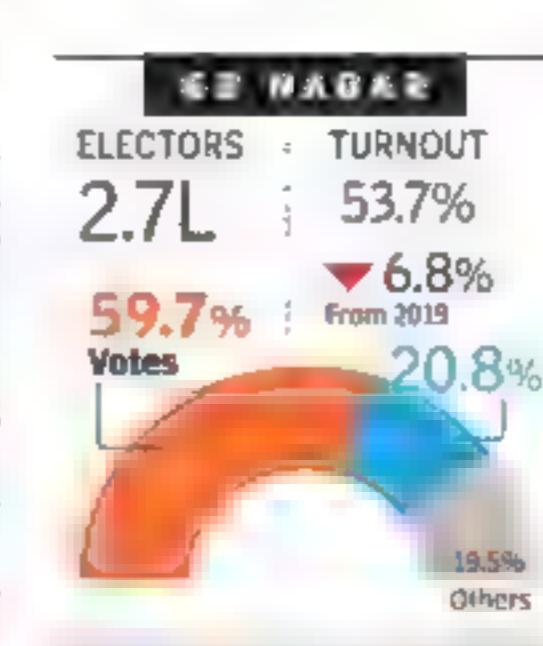
Nagar," he posted on X (formerly Twitter).

Sharma began his political journey as a grassroots worker but rose through the ranks quickly. He contested the Lok Sabha election from GB Nagar in 2009 and secured 2.3 lakh votes but lost to BSP's Surendra Nagar by 16,000 votes. In 2012, he won the assembly elections from Noida with 77,226 votes, defeating BSP's Om Prakash Sharma, who secured 49,582 votes.

In 2014, riding the 'Modi wave', Sharma cornered 5,99,702 votes, defeating SP's Narendra Bhatia, who garnered over 3 lakh votes. Sharma served as the MoS (independent) culture and tourism in Narendra Modi's cabinet.

In 2019, Sharma was polled 80,312 votes to defeat his nearest rival, BSP's Satyavrat Nagar, by a 3.4 lakh margin.

SP's national spokesperson Pradeep Bhatia said despite the party's poor show in GB Nagar, it made gains across UP – with 37 seats. SP will put its



3 TAKES FROM WINNERS

What do you have to say to voters?

I want to thank the people of Gurgaon and Ahirwal for showing trust in me and giving me a sixth term as MP. I also want them to be prepared for upcoming assembly elections.

What is your main focus for the next term?

I will complete pending development projects that could not be completed in the previous term and focus on issues that need to be addressed.

One promise you'll make to voters right now

I promise people of my constituency that I will be available for them and work for their betterment.

Krishan Pal Gurjar | Faridabad

What do you have to say to voters?

People have once again put their faith in the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and BJP. This victory is a testament to voters' desire for development and good governance.

What is your main focus for the next term?

Will prioritise development and effective governance. Primary objectives will be to improve infrastructure, ensure a cleaner Faridabad, create jobs and improve city's connectivity.

One promise you'll make to voters right now

Voters have placed their faith in my abilities and vision. I am deeply humbled by this trust, and I am committed to working tirelessly to meet their expectations.

Mahesh Sharma | Gautam Budh Nagar

What do you have to say to voters?

The 5.6 lakh victory margin reflects their love and affection. But this was expected as we have done a lot of development work in the district. I express my gratitude to the people.

What is your main focus for the next term?

The Lok Sabha election results have just been declared. We will sit together soon and discuss our priorities and development issues for the next term.

One promise you'll make to voters right now

It will be premature to comment, but builder-buyer issues, pollution and farmers' demands are important, and we will address them at the earliest.

Photo: Umesh Kumar

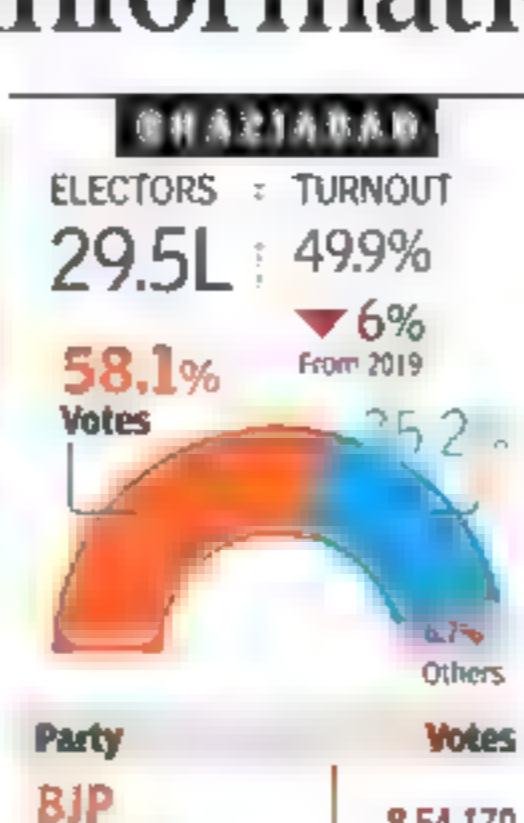


Saffron run unbroken in Gzb as Garg cruises: Faced dissent, misinformation but all well now



PM Modi, who held a roadshow in the city to campaign for him

"Through my campaign, I kept telling the electorate that I am seeking votes in the name of Narendra Modi. I owe my thanks to Modi ji and party workers," he said.



victory to Modi ji and party workers," he said.

Garg – who replaced VK

Singh as the candidate this time said he faced a lot of discontent among voters, particularly among the Rajputs who were unhappy with the party as few members from the community were given tickets.

"This win is personally relieving for me. A lot of misinformation was spread against me by the opposition. I battled dissent as well. But as they say, all's well that ends well. NDA, under Modi ji, is set to create history by forming the govt the third time in a row," he added.

Garg, who maintained his lead from the first round itself, bagged 8.5 lakh votes by the end of the 62nd round. Dolly Sharma of Congress – the INDIA Bloc candidate – secured 5.2 lakh votes. She secured 35.2% of the total votes polled while Garg bagged over 58%.

"Honestly speaking, I was

hopeful of a win this time. I had worked hard for it. But even in defeat, I can say this is Congress's best performance in years. It was battle well-fought," she said.

In the last Lok Sabha polls of 2019, Sharma managed just 7% of the votes polled and lost to VK Singh, emerging third.

BSP's Nand Kishor Pundir ended up with a little over 75,000 votes.

"At least we tried. The final verdict, however, rests with 'Janta janardan'. We respect their decision," he said.

Apart from BJP, Congress and BSP candidates, there were 11 more nominees in the fray from the seat.

At 0.47%, their combined

vote share was even lower than that of NOTA, which accounted for 0.5% of the total votes polled. All of them had their deposits forfeited.

Dhanyavad (thank you). I will strive to make India and the district 'Viksit Rashtra' and 'Viksit Ghaziabad'.

What is your main focus for the next term?

Will take up unfinished projects, including international stadium and metro extension. Efforts will be made to start more flight services from the Hindon civil terminal.

One promise you'll make to voters right now

I will be with the people day and night. As their representative, I will take up local issues in the parliament and coordinate with the Centre and ministries too.

Photo: Umesh Kumar

ALT CITY | GAZIABAD

BJP workers celebrate in Ghaziabad



Change Rides On SP's Cycle

SP-Cong Bag 43, Limit BJP+ To Just 36; BSP Decimated

TEAM TOI

Lucknow: In a stunning setback to NDA in UP, SP-Congress combine won 43 Lok Sabha seats, restricting BJP and its allies to just 36 which was a loss of 25 seats compared to the 64 seats that NDA won in 2019. BJP vote share dropped from 49.97% in 2019 to just over 41% this time.

SP and Congress won 37 and 6 seats, respectively — a significant rise of 37 seats than in 2019 when the two had together won six seats.

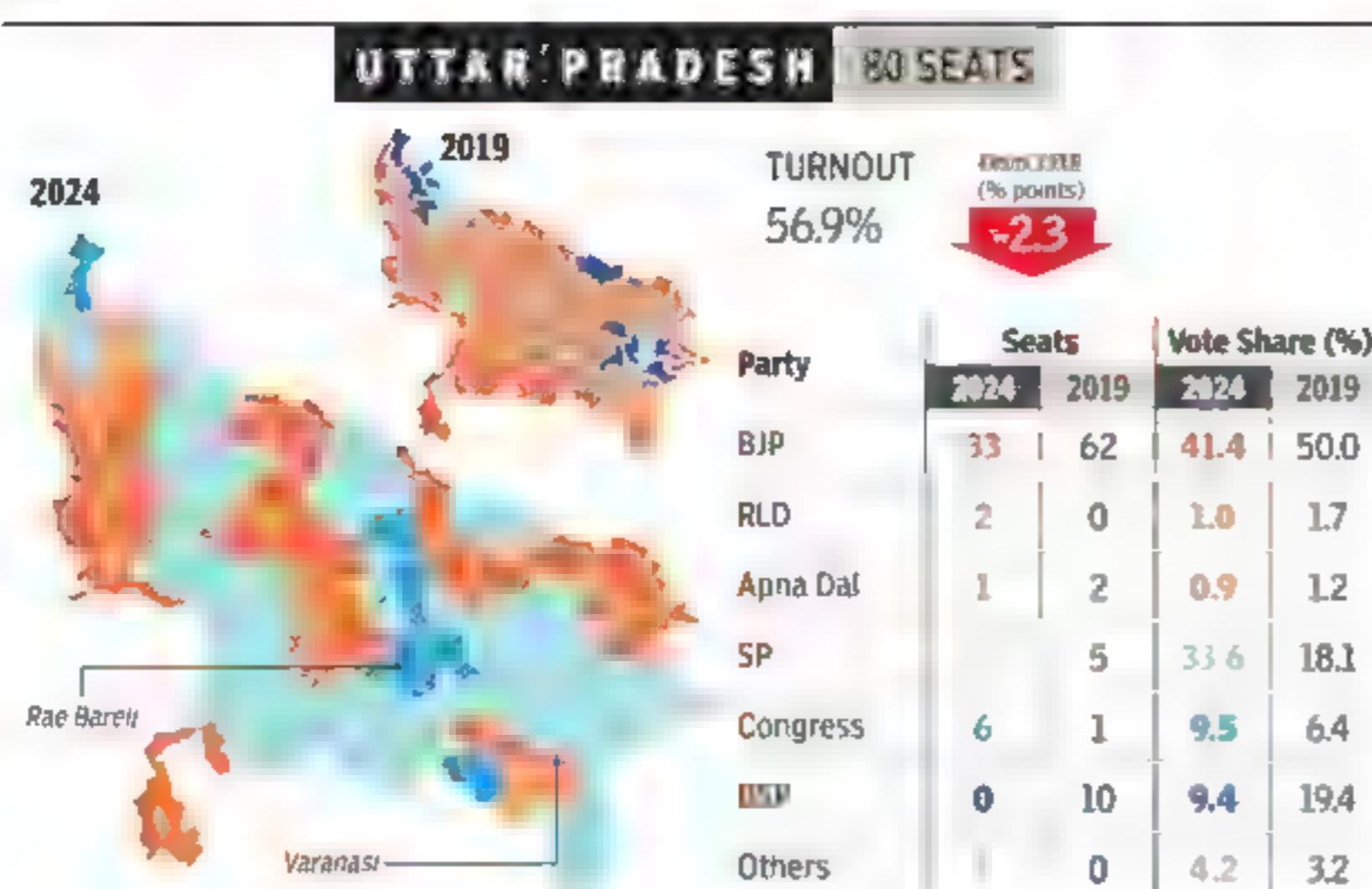
Smriti Irani was among the seven Union ministers who lost in the state. Irani's loss to Gandhi family loyalist KL Sharma in Amethi by a margin of over 1.6 lakh votes evinced keen interest as she had defeated Rahul Gandhi in this seat last time by over 55,000 votes.

Minority report: 4/4 for SP's Muslim picks

TEAM TOI

Lucknow: All four Samajwadi Party (SP) Muslim candidates fielded came out with flying colours despite facing tough BJP competition as the community voted en bloc in favour of the Akhilesh Yadav-led party as well as his INDIA ally Congress.

SP fielded just four Muslims in a bid to shrug off its image as a party of Muslims and Yadavs (MY). This was against 20 put into the fray by BSP. The pattern was so stark that the 20 BSP candidates not only failed to win but



While PM Narendra Modi and defence minister Rajnath Singh saw their victory margins falling, Rahul won by over 3.9 lakh votes. SP won all five seats from where members of the Yadav first family contested — Kannauj (Akhilesh Yadav), Mainpuri (Dimple Yadav), Badraun (Aditya Yadav), Farrukhabad (Akshay Yadav) and Azam-

garh (Dharmendra Yadav).

SP's emphatic win was a perceptible increase compared to 2019 when the party, in alliance with BSP, could win only five seats.

Congress, too, sprung a surprise by winning six seats including both its stronghold of Rae Bareli and Amethi. Congress also won from Saharanpur after a gap of 40 years.

Nagina was won by Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) chief Chandrashekhar Azad, in a development that endorsed his political rise in west UP. At the same time, Mayawati led BSP faced a complete decimation with its vote share dipping from over 19% in 2019 to just around 9% this time, turning the spotlight back on the Dalit outfit's

SP's significantly improved tally bolstered its position as BJP's main rival in Uttar Pradesh, in what could potentially set a poll narrative in the run-up to the 2027 UP polls.

SP's vote share dipped from 59.1% in 2019 to 49.2%, reflecting the party's sudden slide after a strong showing in the assembly polls.

BJP's vote share increased from 18.1% in 2019 to 23.1%, it had then contested on 37 seats — to over 33% this time when it contested on 62 seats. The increase was essentially because of the comprehensive consolidation of Muslims behind the alliance. SP is also reported to have received the support of a section of OBCs and Dalits who had drifted away from BSP and BJP.

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DUMKA, JHARKHAND

Sita Soren

From JMM to BJP

LOST TO

Nalin Soren

JMM

BY

22,527

VOTES

Based on wins and leads at midnight

CUTTACK, ODISHA

Bhartruhari Mahtab

From BJD to BJP

WON AGAINST

Santrupti Misra

BJD

BY

57,077

VOTES

PATIALA, PUNJAB

Preneet Kaur

From Cong to BJP

LOST TO

Dharamvira Gandhi

Cong

BY

16,618

VOTES

BARRACKPUR, WB

Arjun Singh

From TMC to BJP

LOST TO

Partha Bhawmick

TMC

BY

64,438

VOTES

RAJAMPET, ANDHRA

Kiran Reddy

From Cong to BJP

LOST TO

PV Midhun Reddy

YSMIP

BY

76,071

VOTES

PATHANAMTHITTA, KERALA

Anil Antony

From Cong to BJP

LOST TO

Anto Antony

Cong

BY

1,33,217

VOTES

LUDHIANA, PUNJAB

Ravneet Singh Bittu

From Cong to BJP

LOST TO

AS Raja Warring

Cong

BY

20,942

VOTES

Didi's Double Delight: Weak Centre, Weaker State Oppn

TEAM TOI

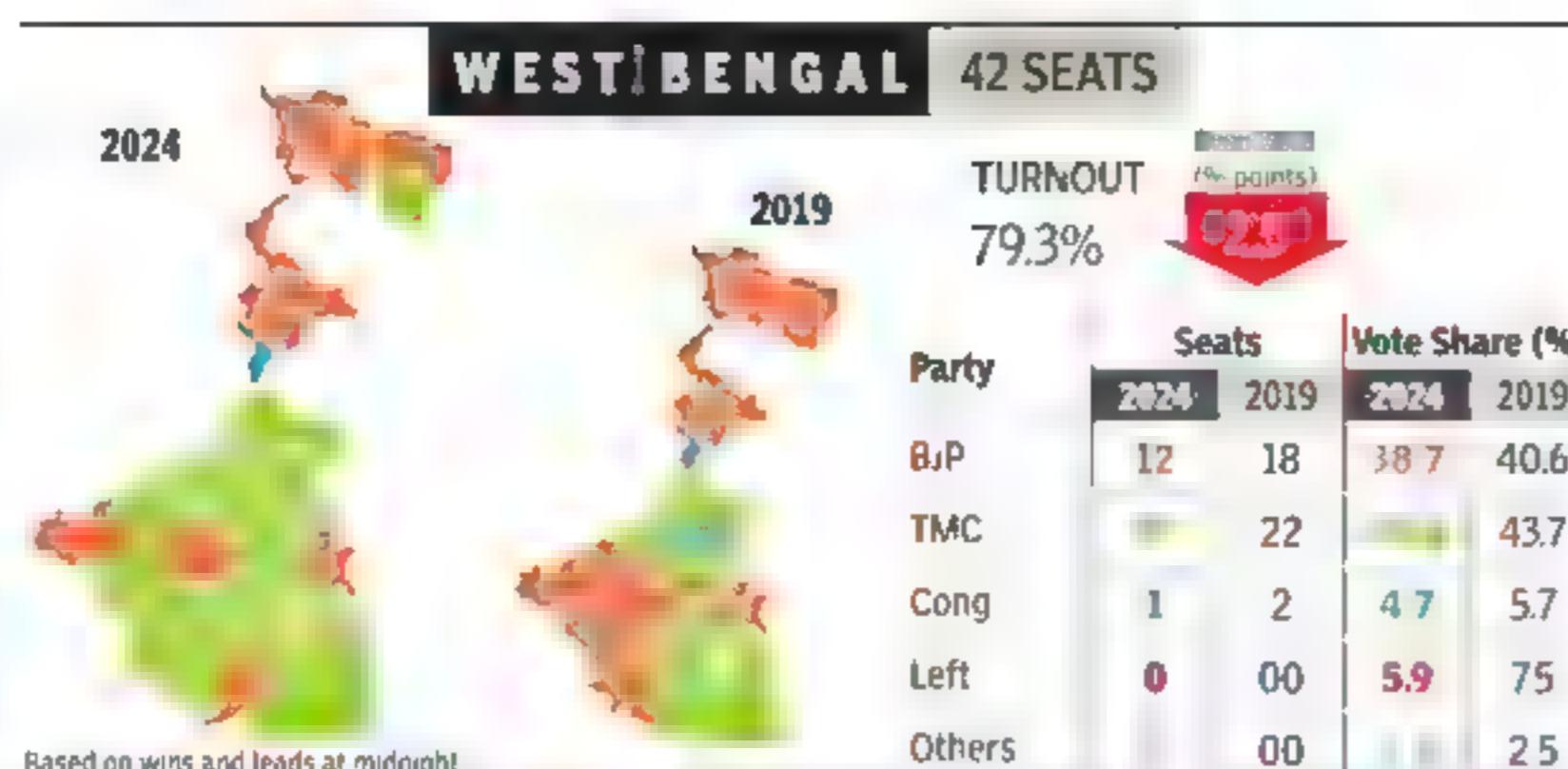
Kolkata: Bengal's voters gave BJP a feeble mandate in 2024 Lok Sabha elections, helping Trinamool Congress (TMC) contain the saf from party largely to its pockets of influence and giving CM Mamata Banerjee the double delight of a weakened Centre and a weaker opposition in the state.

BJP won or led in 12 of 42 seats in Bengal — down from its 2019 tally of 18. Trinamool increased its count from 22 to 29. Congress managed to retain one of its bastions in Malda (South) but, in one of the biggest upsets of this election, old warhorse Adhir Chowdhury lost his Behrampore seat for the first time since 1999 to Trinamool newbie and former Team India cricketer Yusuf Pathan. Left Front, which fought as part of INDIA bloc, repeated its 2019 no-show in Bengal.

Trinamool increased its vote share from 43.7% in 2019 to 45.7% while both BJP and Congress-LF combine saw their slippage. BJP slid from 40.6% to 38.7% and the combined Congress-LF vote share slipped from 13.2% to 10.3% this time.

BJP won Contai and Tamuk in East Midnapore, the home district of its state pol. mascot, Suvendu Adhikari, by not-so-impressive margins, but saw two of its three Union ministers lose.

Subhas Sarkar in Bankura and Nisith Pramanik in Coochbehar. The third junior Union minister, Shantanu Thakur, won in Bongaon.



Former state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh, too, lost in Burdwan Durgapur, where he was shifted just before the election season from his old seat of Midnapore. The party, in the bargain, also lost Midnapore BJP lost Barrackpore as well, where it fielded Arjun Singh. Voter confusion over his multiple flip-flops and which party he was representing this time may have played a part.

North Bengal and a few isolated pockets like Purulia, Bishnupur and Ranaghat gave BJP some comfort but everywhere, the margin seemed to be coming down substantially.

Trinamool ticked all the boxes in this election. A large part of its impressive showing came from the support of women voters, who benefited from welfare schemes like Lakshmi Bhandar and Sabuj Sathi. Voters benefiting from Swasthya Sathi played a role, too.

BJP failed in almost all its



poll pitches. The Sandeshkhali narrative that it built during the start of the campaign seemed to have come apart after the release of sting videos, which showed local BJP functionaries admitting that women were coached to file rape complaints. BJP lost Basirhat and more significantly, trounced in Sandeshkhali assembly segment.

Trinamool also thwarted BJP's CAA-NRC pitch, sow-

ing apprehension and confusion among voters over how things would play out after they applied for Indian citizenship under CAA. BJP retained both Ranaghat and Bongaon where Matuas are a substantial chunk—but appeared to be doing so with reduced margins.

BJP's last-ditch attempt to play the "appeasement" card against Trinamool failed to make any significant impact.

TDP, JD(U) won't break INDIA: Didi

The LS poll results showed PM Modi had lost all credibility, and both he and Union home minister Amit Shah, should "resign on moral grounds", Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday.

Extending support to INDIA bloc, she said she would "certainly help" in its bid to form govt. Mamata, however, said she would skip the INDIA bloc meeting on Wednesday.

She mocked BJP, saying the party now has to "beg" TDP and JD(U) to form govt. "I know them (Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar) very well. They won't break India," Mamata said. **TNN**

The Bengal campaign of PM Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah started with a focus on development and "Modi ki guarantee", but changed tracks midway with an increased glare on Trinamool's "appeasement" politics. This preempted any chances of a large-scale split of Muslim votes between Trinamool and Congress-LF combine. Trinamool would have gained from the resultant Muslim vote consolidation, but there was no substantial Hindu vote consolidation to help BJP.

Trinamool successfully countered the last weapon in BJP's arsenal — "corruption" in the state administration with an amplified message to voters that Centre was playing political vendetta in denying the state its share of funds.

Former CM Manju, who heads Hindustani Awam Morcha Secular, succeeded in making his parliamentary debut at the age of 79, registering victory from the reserved seat of Gava. However, NDA partner Upendra Ara shifted to CPI ML (Liberation's Sudama Prasad) by

Written off, Nitish surprises all and equals BJP's dozen

TEAM TOI

Patna: Bihar CM Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) and BJP registered victories in 12 seats each as NDA won 30 of 40 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar, while the opposition INDIA bloc had to be content with nine and an independent won one to wrap up the count on Tuesday.

Among the other NDA partners, Chirag Paswan-led LJP (RV) took five, winning all the seats it contested, while former CM Jitendra Singh Patnaik-led HAMS secured victory in one.

NDA lost nine seats compared to 2019, when the alliance steamrolled the opposition to win 39 seats, with Congress winning only Kishanganj. However, BJP had been relatively consistent in the state. The party had won 22 seats in 2014 and all the 17 it contested in 2019.

Among INDIA bloc allies, RJD won four seats, Congress three and CPI ML (Liberation) two, while Pappu Yadav won in Purnea as an independent. The opposition alliance gained eight seats. This year, Congress added Katihar and Saran to its kitty, while retaining Kishanganj.

Union ministers Giriraj Singh and Nityanand Rai retained Begusarai and Ujjaypur seats, respectively, but their central colleague and power minister RK Singh lost his traditional Ara seat to CPI ML (Liberation's Sudama Prasad) by around 60,000 votes.

Former CM Manju, who heads Hindustani Awam Morcha Secular, succeeded in making his parliamentary debut at the age of 79, registering victory from the reserved seat of Gava. However, NDA partner Upendra Ara shifted to CPI ML (Liberation's Sudama Prasad) by

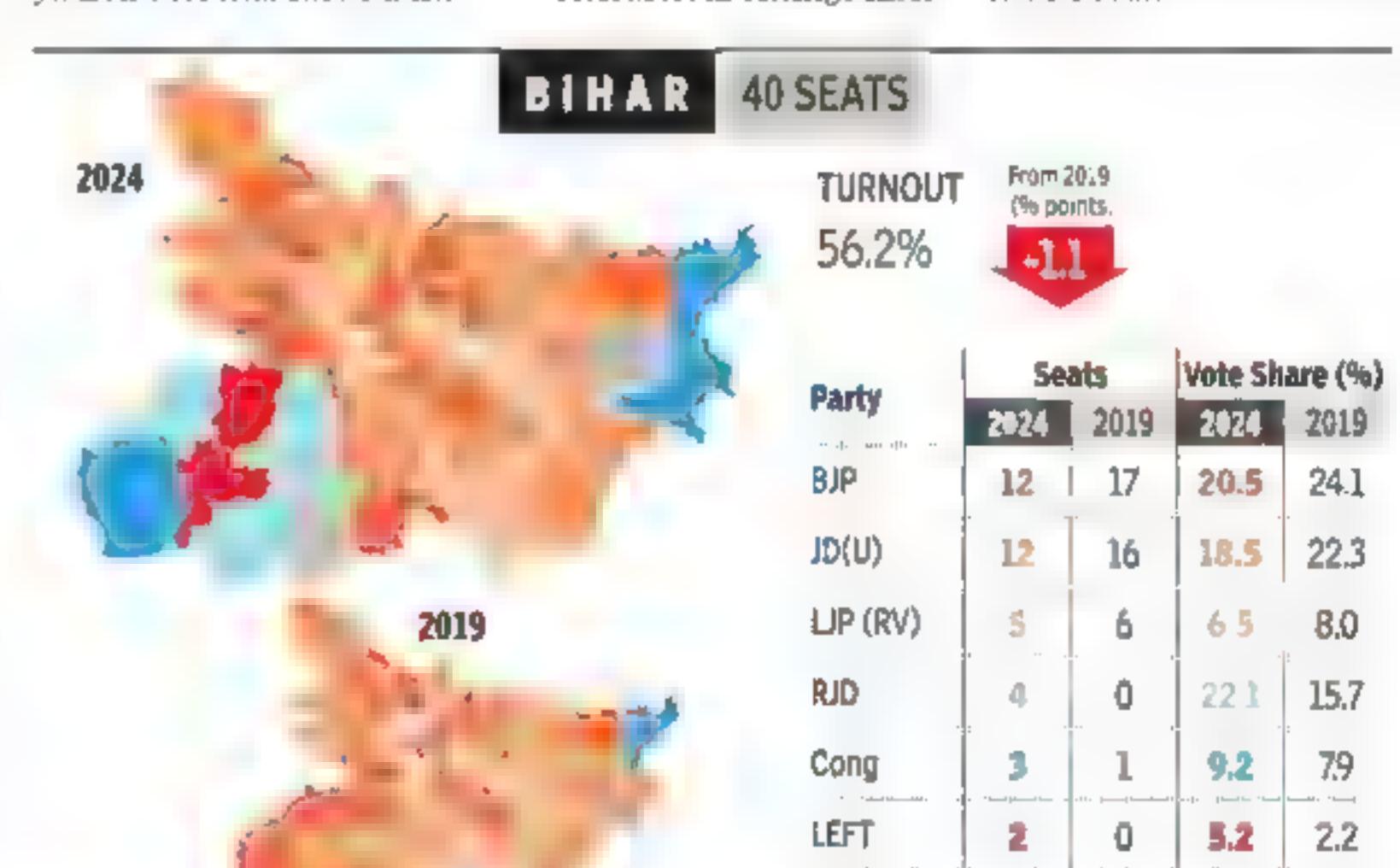
SUNRISE: Chirag (seen here with his mother) proved with his party's decisive victory that he is the 'real' political heir of Ram Vilas Paswan

Chirag registers 100% strike rate

Rudy's third win against Lalu kin

Former Union minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy scored a hat-trick for BJP in Saran by defeating Lalu Prasad's daughter Rohini Acharya by over 13,000 votes, each time getting the better of a member of RJD's extended family. Neeru Rohini — popularly as "kidney girl" for having donated one of her kidneys to her ailing father around two years ago — nor anyone in her circles had anticipated that her poll debut would turn out to be baptism by fire. In 2014, Rudy had defeated Lalu's wife and former BJD CM Rabri Devi by 41,000 votes. Five years later, Rudy widened the gap, beating former state minister and RJD nomi Chandra Sekhar Ray by nearly 1.4 lakh votes. Ray is the father-in-law of Lalu's eldest son and ex-minister Tej Pratap Yadav. Lalu had defeated Rudy in 2004 and 2009. **TNN**

Munshi (Jharkhand), Surendra Yadav (Belgaum), Suga Prasad (Tarapur) and Sudhakar Singh (Rampurhat, Kaimur) — as well as one sitting RS member Misa Bharti has won. This will lead to bypolls to four assembly seats and one RS seat.



Manipur & 3 N-E Estates dump NDA

TEAM TOI

Guwahati: NDA experienced setbacks in the North-east, losing three seats from its 2019 LS tally while Congress saw a resurgence in the region once considered its bastion. Of the seven LS seats Congress won in the region, Rahul Gandhi's Bhar Jodo Nyay Yatra had traversed through six.

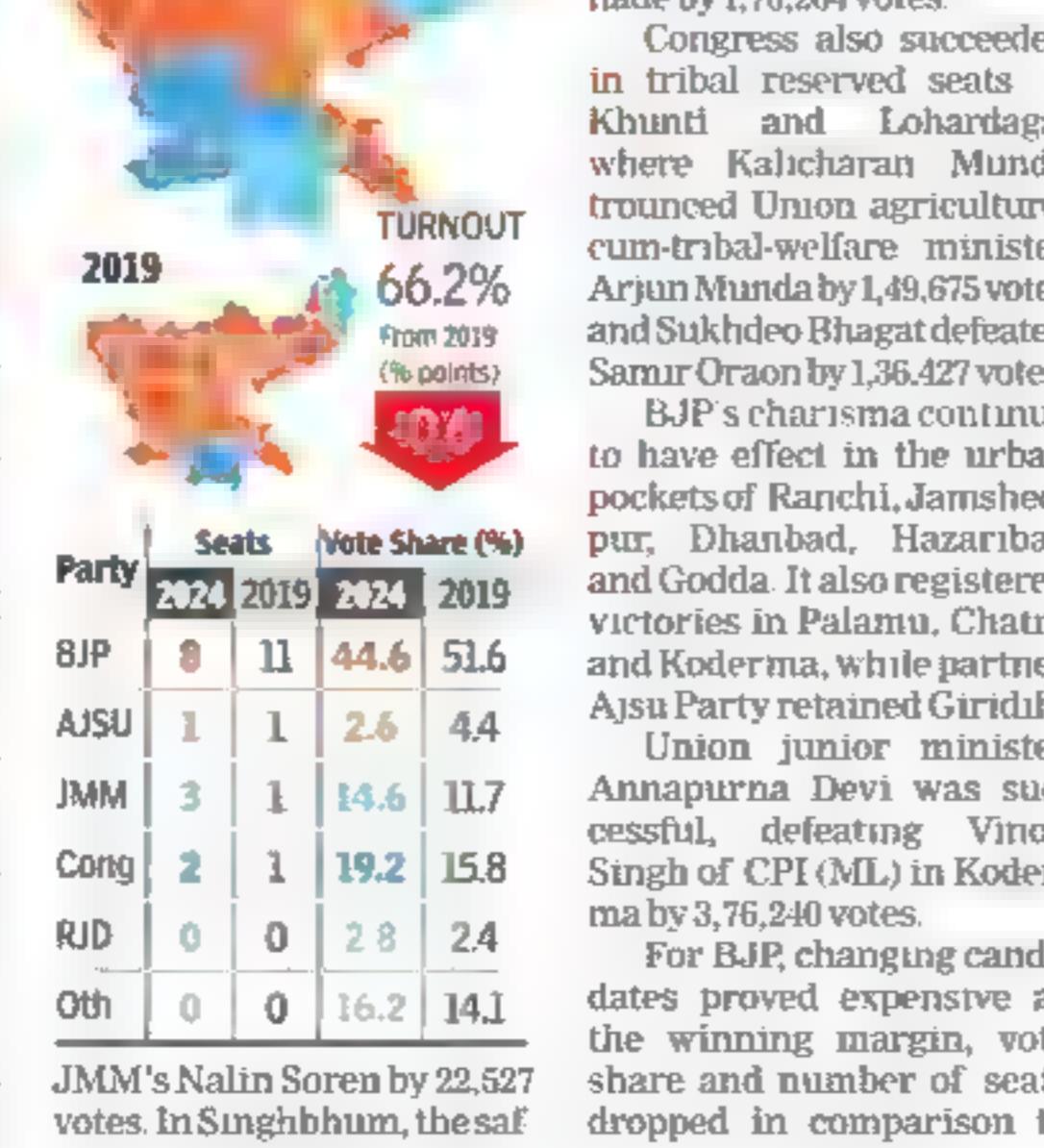
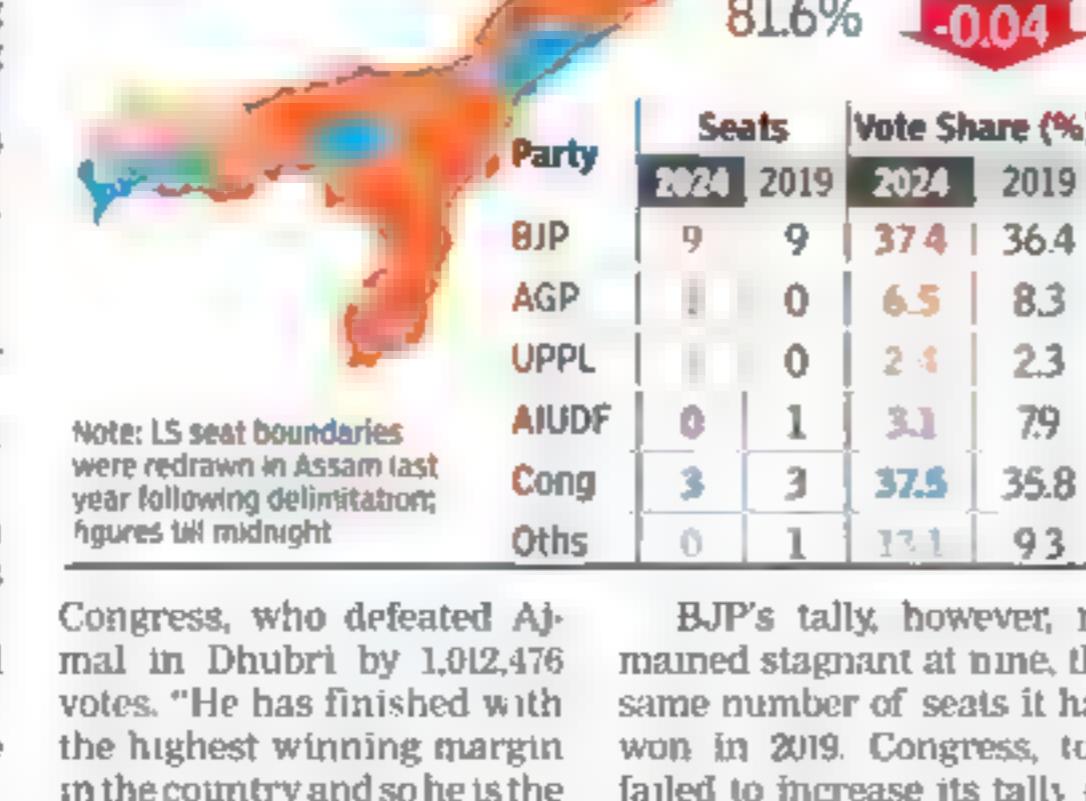
NDA's biggest dent was in trouble-torn Manipur, where Congress defeated BJP in Meitei-dominated Inner Manipur and its ally NPP in the tribal majority outer Manipur.

In Mizoram, ZPM wrested the lone seat. In Nagaland, Con-

gress secured victory in 11 of Assam's 14 Lok Sabha seats, increasing its tally of 2019 by two, leaving the remaining three for Congress. The election results Tuesday sprang two significant surprises — the exit of AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal and the return of regional party and NDA partner AGP to LS after 10 years.

CM Hemanta Biswa Sarma said that no party governing Assam had ever won these many Lok Sabha seats in the state. "Not even (former CM) Tarun Gogoi could achieve this feat," he said.

According to the CM, the biggest victory in the state belonged to Rakibul Hussain of





MANDI, HIMACHAL

Kangana Ranaut
BJP
WON AGAINST
Sunita Verma
SP
BY 10,585 VOTES

Vikramaditya Singh Cong BY 74,755 VOTES

MEERUT, UP

Arun Govil
BJP
WON AGAINST

Sunita Verma SP BY 10,585 VOTES

MATHURA, UP

Hema Malini
BJP
WON AGAINST
Mukesh Dhingar Cong BY 2,93,407 VOTES

Kajal Nishad SP BY 1,03,526 VOTES

GORAKHPUR, UP

Ravi Kishan
BJP
WON AGAINST
Kajal Nishad SP BY 1,03,526 VOTES

SS Ahluwalia TMC BY 59,564 VOTES

ASANSOL, WB

Shatrughan Sinha
TMC
WON AGAINST
VS Sunilkumar CPI BY 74,686 VOTES

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury Cong BY 85,022 VOTES

THRISSUR, KERALA

Suresh Gopi
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Yusuf Pathan TMC
WON AGAINST

BAHARAMPUR, WB

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TMC
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Maha Jolt To NDA, Big Boost For INDIA Bloc

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: In the 2019 polls, Maharashtra, which sends the second highest number of MPs to the Lok Sabha in the country, played a key role in PM Modi's victory with the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance winning 41 of the state's 48 seats. But in Verdict 2024, the state has delivered a major jolt to the NDA. The opposition led Maha Vikas Aghadi dominated the state with leads or victories in 30 seats, leaving the BJP-led Mahayati alliance trailing far behind with leads or wins in just 17 seats. Vishal Patil, the Congress rebel who won from Sangli as an independent, is also expected to add to MVA's numbers.

This is the outcome despite the BJP-triggered split of two regional parties—Shiv Sena and NCP—with the aim of fracturing the opposition and raising its own numbers. Instead, this consolidated the opposition vote, with Congress being the biggest beneficiary. Congress replaced BJP as the single largest party in the state with leads or victories in 13 seats. This was a dramatic turnaround from its historic low of winning just one seat in 2019.

Responding to the results, Within the MVA, Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) bagged or led in 9 seats and NCP (SP) led in or won 8 seats. Both parties won more seats than the parties that split from them. In Baramati, the most keenly watched contest in the state, Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule defeated Ajit Pawar's wife, Sunetra Pawar.

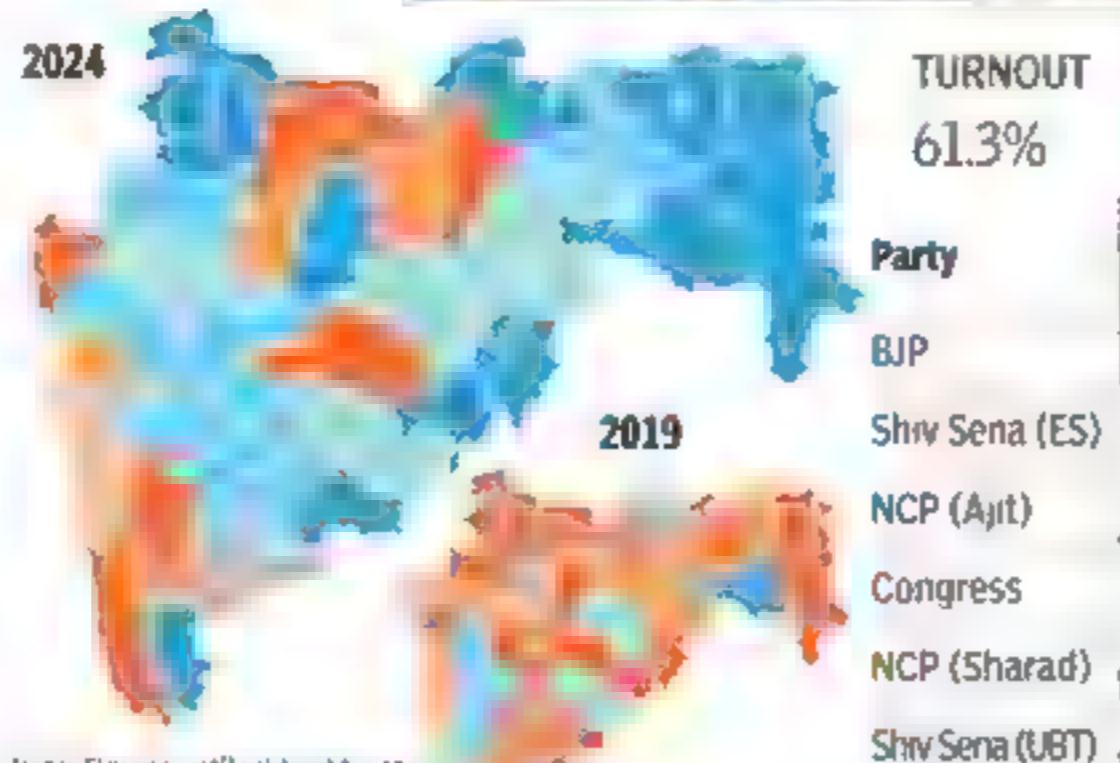
Observers said it's clear that Mahayati's strategy of relying on PM Modi's appeal did not deliver results. On the contrary, 'Operation Lotus' boomeranged and generated

sympathy for Thackeray and Sharad Pawar. Indeed, allying with Ajit Pawar who BJP had strongly targeted during the irrigation scam may have upset the party's core voters.

Also, Modi's statements about appeasement of Muslims during his Lok Sabha poll campaign, his reference to Sharad Pawar as 'bhakta' atma (wandering soul) and Shiv Sena (UBT) as 'naksh Se' seem to have backfired.

Experts said the consolidation of Muslim and Dalit votes helped the MVA. "The youth face unemployment, farmers are upset with Centre's policies and these sections went against Mahayati. Muslims and Dalits consoli-

MAHARASHTRA 48 SEATS



TURNOUT

61.3%

Party

BJP

Seats

2024

2019

Vote Share (%)

2024

2019

NA

Shiv Sena (ES)

7

13

13.0

NA

NCP (Ajit)

1

3

3.6

NA

Congress

13

1

17

16.4

NA

NCP (Sharad)

7

3

10.2

NA

Shiv Sena (UBT)

5

16

8

NA

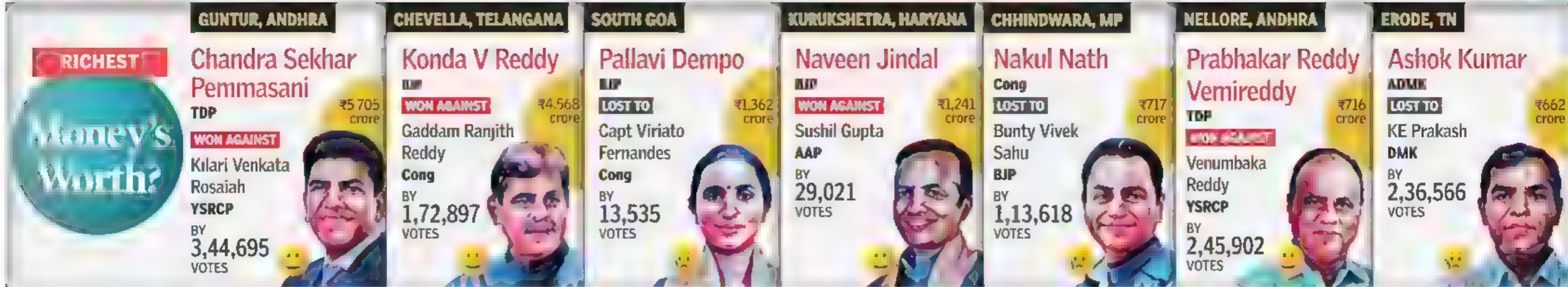
Others

2

13.6

16.6

NA



Poll Guarantees Lift Cong Vote Share, Stop BJP March

TEAM TOI

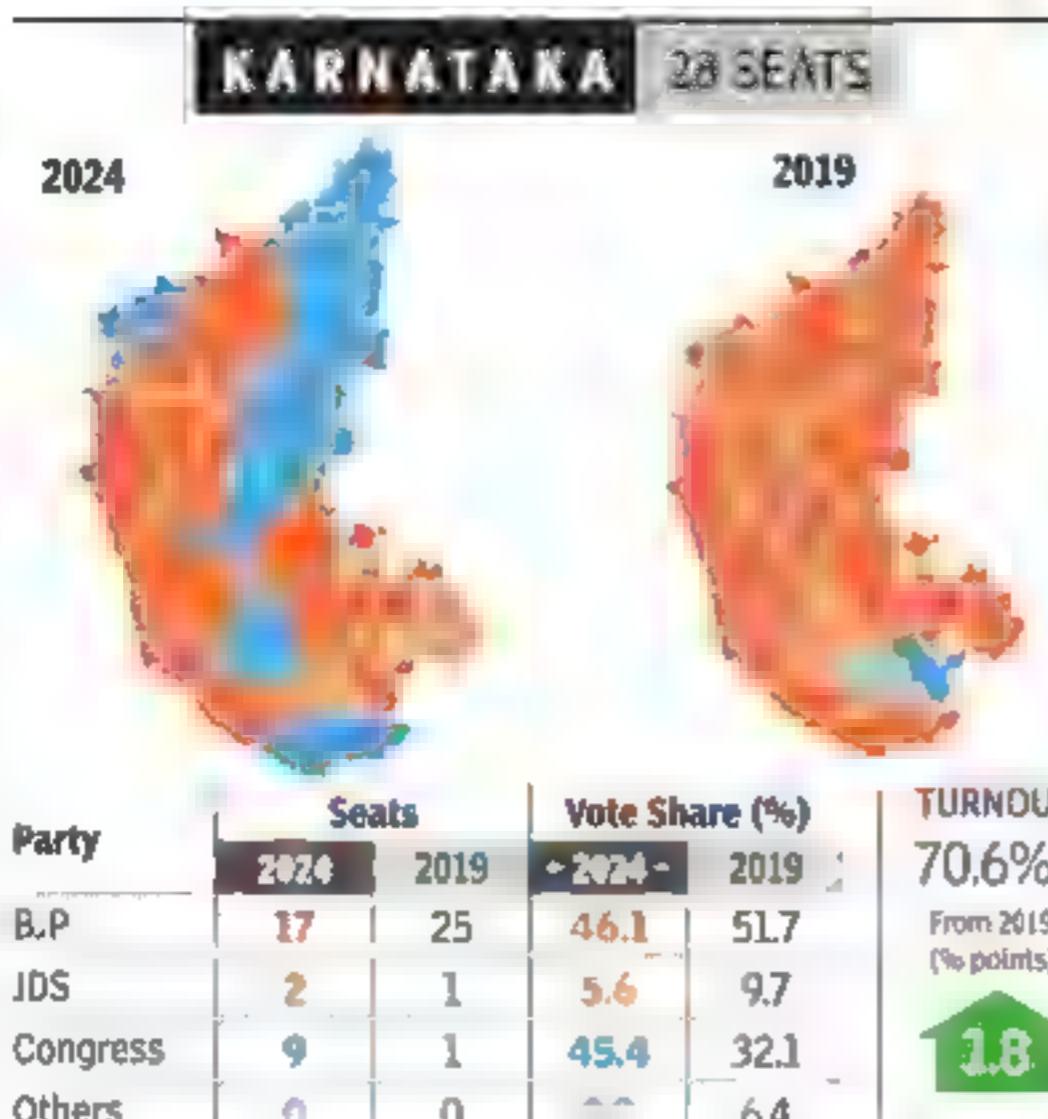
Bengaluru: The much-hyped five poll guarantees announced by Congress have boosted the party's vote share in Karnataka but they failed to help it win enough seats.

Congress was hoping that its schemes—free bus rides for women, free electricity, free rations, and allowances for women and unemployed youths—for which state govt earmarked Rs 52,009 crore in the budget, along with the Rs 1 lakh offer to women heads of family in its national manifesto, would influence voters and help it reach the double-digit mark. But the party fell short by one seat.

Despite the focus being on women, the party did not see an uptick in the number of seats it won. The vote-share difference of less than 1% between Congress and BJP spoke volumes.

BJP's 'Modi ki guarantee,' in response to Congress's guarantees, worked for the saffron party in securing 17 constituencies, though it failed to reach the target of 20-plus seats. BJP crafted a narrative challenging the guarantee schemes, claiming that these welfare initiatives, though appealing, are being funded at the expense of taxpayers, leading to a rise in the cost of daily essentials and hampering development works.

While Congress performed well in the north and central Karnataka regions, winning 7 of the 14 seats, it failed to deliver in the Vokkaliga-dominated south where it secured only two of the 14 seats. In 2019, BJP won 12 seats in the south and 14 in the north.



MIXED BAG: 'Modi ki guarantee' helped the saffron party secure wins in 17 constituencies

Senior party functionaries said Congress this time managed to win the maximum seats in Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka), largely because of the consolidation of Muslim and SC/ST votes. While Muslim consolidation was on expected lines, the SC/ST consolidation was due to Congress central campaign theme alleging that the Constitution (reservation) is under serious threat if BJP returned to office.

After former Uttara Kannada BJP MP Anantkumar Hegde said the Constitution could be changed if BJP won a thumping majority in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi and other senior Congress functionaries upped the rhetoric to specifically declare that this election was about protecting the 'samvidhan' (Constitution) and 'gareeb'

(poor). Though BJP denied Hegde a ticket and kept assuring that the Constitution would remain untouched, it did not help its cause.

In BJP's stronghold of Kittur-Karnataka (Mumbai-Karnataka), Congress managed to wrest only Chikkodi, and it is being said that this was largely due to a personal feud between the Jarkiholi brothers and women and child development minister Laxmi Hebbalkar.

Party insiders revealed there was an unwritten rule wherein the Jarkiholi brothers, despite being in different parties, would support BJP in Belagavi and Congress in Chikkodi. This arrangement was made to ensure the victory of PWD minister Satish Jarkiholi's daughter Priyanka, and defeat Hebbalkar's son Mrunal, especially con-

sidering her proximity to Congress state president and deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who has been actively involved in efforts to gain control over Belagavi.

Another significant factor that worked in favour of Congress was the display of unity.

BJP had hoped to exploit the differences between chief minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. However, Congress made sure to exhibit enough camaraderie, both publicly and internally. Both leaders took part in joint campaigns across the state.

Following a disappointing performance in last year's assembly elections, the saffron party was hoping for a resurgence in the state under the new leadership of state BJP president BV Vijayendra, son of former CM BS Yediyurappa, by single-handedly winning over 20 seats.

Yediyurappa had fought against all odds to se-

cure the Karnataka BJP chief post for his son. However, the results have turned out to be a mixed bag, thanks to infighting within the party.

The father-son duo failed to prove their influence over the party in north Karnataka, where the major Lingayat community to which they belong, resides.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, who were vying to prove their mettle in south Karnataka, have failed to make a significant impact. However, it was AIADMK chief Mallikarjun Kharge who stole the march, ensuring a big victory for the party in Kalyana Karnataka.

Nevertheless, the results proved that the alliance between BJP and JD(S) proved helpful for both parties to check Congress dominance in the Vokkaliga-dominated areas of the Old Mysuru region. Though they lost Hassan, political pundits attribute the negative result more to JD(S) candidate Pravali Revanna than the parties.

The biggest setback has been for Shivakumar, who had emerged as the Vokkaliga face, wresting influence from the Gowda family in the assembly polls held last year.

The community seems to be miffed with the Congress govt over a host of issues in the past 12 months, including the caste census report.

The 2024 poll outcome in the state also clearly indicates that Karnataka has voted differently in national and state elections. Since 2004, Karnataka voters have consistently supported the saffron party, even during the Congress-led UPA govt's strong performances in 2004 and 2009.

40-40: TN voters give it all to DMK alliance

TEAM TOI

Chennai: Forty out of forty. That's what Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin told his party cadre last month, urging them to ensure that DMK and its allies win all the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the state and the one in neighbouring Puducherry. And INDIA bloc ticked all the 40 boxes on Tuesday.

The big win in the three-cornered fight gives credence to the alliance's ideological bonding strengthened by the common opposition to BJP. It also leaves AIADMK and BJP, former electoral partners, in doldrums to rethink their strategies before the 2026 assembly election.

While AIADMK's unimpressive line-up failed to impress the electorate, BJP couldn't do any better with its high-profile candidates like state president K Annamalai (Coimbatore), Union minister L Murugan (Nuligur) and former Telangana governor Tamizhi Soundararajan (Chennai South). Ousted AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam, who contested in Ramanathapuram as an NDA-backed independent, lagged behind DMK ally IULM's K Navaskari by a margin of more than 1.6 lakh votes (yet to be announced).

The counting gave some anxious moments to many candidates. After leading initially, BJP's Tirunelveli candidate and MLA Nairan Naigendran fell by the wayside and Congress candidate Robert Bruce won by more than 1.6 lakh votes. AIADMK ally and DMK Virudhunagar candidate Vijay Prabhakar maintained a lead over its Congress rival Manicka Tagore, who finally registered a thin margin of more than 4,000 votes. PMK's Dharmapuri candidate and Sowmya Anbumani (NDA) gave a tough fight to DMK's A Mari before losing by a margin of 21,000 votes. At the end of counting, DMK's Ganapathy Rajkumar was ahead of Annamalai by more than one lakh votes.

As soon as the trends showed INDIA bloc leading in most of the constituencies, Stalin visited his father MK Stalin's memorial on Marina beach in Chennai and paid his respects. Later in the evening, Stalin said, "I know my height," repeating his father's famous words when asked about his aspirations and probability of his play in the national level.

Stalin will leave for Delhi on Wednesday morning to take part in the INDIA bloc meeting. He thanked his alliance leaders and cadres for their efforts "to defeat fascism and to safeguard democracy and the Constitution."

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the DMK-led alliance



SUM-RISE CONTINUES IN TAMIL NADU

bucked the national trend to win 38 seats in TN, leaving only the Theni seat to the then United AIADMK in the company of BJP, and grabbing the lone Puducherry seat as well. With the 2024 Lok Sabha poll victory in TN, Stalin has pulled off a hattrick with his successes in 2019 and 2021 (assembly election) after taking over the DMK reins. Party colleagues and allies say the victory is a referendum for Stalin's governance.

In the opposition camp, while AIADMK rejoiced its second position with an overall vote share of 20%, having contested 32 seats, the BJP was muted in its celebration, having lost all the 19 seats it contested.

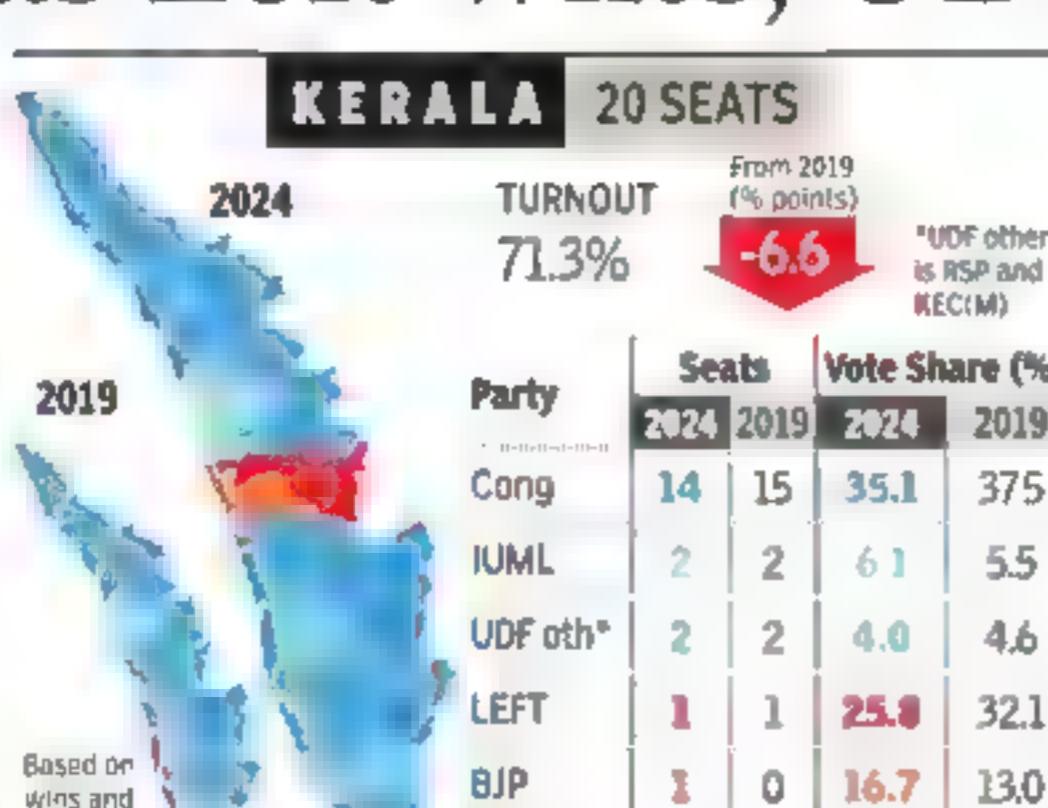
The opposition contest and campaign centered on "exposing" DMK and Stalin with attacks on their failure to keep the pre-poll promises and practicing corruption and dynasty politics. The 'DMK files' (audio recordings of alleged conversations of some DMK functionaries), allegations of misgovernance, poor law and order, arrest and IT searches of senior ministers and charges of nepotism following the elevation of Stalin's son Udhayandhi failed to cut ice with the electorate.

For first time in God's Own Country, lotus blooms as Left wilts, UDF retains its share

TEAM TOI

Kochi: UDF won 18 out of 20 seats in Kerala, almost mirroring its 19.1 sweep in 2019, but the jubilation was overshadowed by nothing short of a historic BJP win in Thirissur, a prestigious constituency with almost 80% minority votes and where the three-cornered contest was supposed to underline that, try as they might, the saffron party's polarising politics had no place in this 'progressive' state.

The UDF won by an above-1-lakh margin in 11 of 18 constituencies, including in Wayanad where Rahul Gandhi trumped his nearest rival Annie Raja of CPI by 3,64,422 votes. UDF's second-biggest partner Muslim League retained its stranglehold on



finally defeating his nearest rival Rajeev Chandrasekhar of BJP by 15,000 votes, a steep fall from his handsome 90,000 plus margin in 2019.

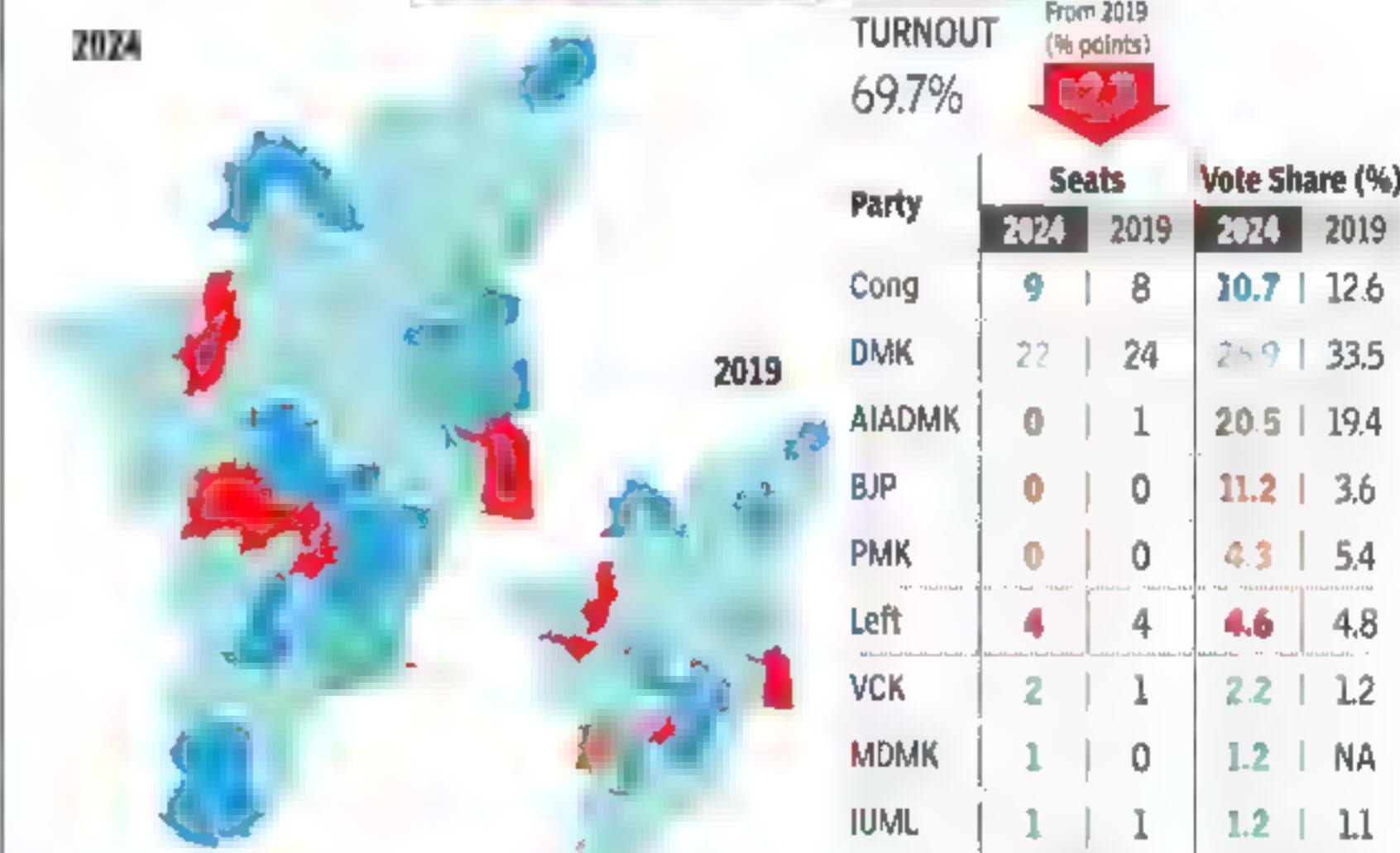
The LDF, in contrast, barely saved face with a win at the Alathur reserved seat where K Rathakrishnan, a minister in the Pinarayi cabinet, won by 19,587 votes and came extremely close at Attinal, its candidate losing by just 1,708 votes. Alathur interestingly also saw the largest number of NOTA votes in the state at 12,033. The LDF's Lok Sabha campaign, led by the chief minister from the front, had banked on an aggressive strategy to cast itself as the sole protector of minorities and champion of secularism but failed miserably.

The bulk of Muslim and substantial inroads among Malabar Muslims. In Thiruvananthapuram, three-time Congress MP Shashi Tharoor survived an early scare by

Christian votes appeared to have gone UDF's way.

BJP-led NDA had put up a stiff fight in all 20 constituencies this time and had expected to come a close second in Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur. In the event, actor-turned-politician Suresh Gopi's triumph in Thrissur by a margin of 74,606 votes was as surprising as sensational.

Surprising, because he was ranged against two formidable candidates, while 39% of the electorate in the constituency comprises minority votes—16% Christian and 23% Muslim votes. BJP had pursued an aggressive statewide strategy of seeking Christian support and it appears to have paid dividends, especially among its more affluent sections in Thrissur

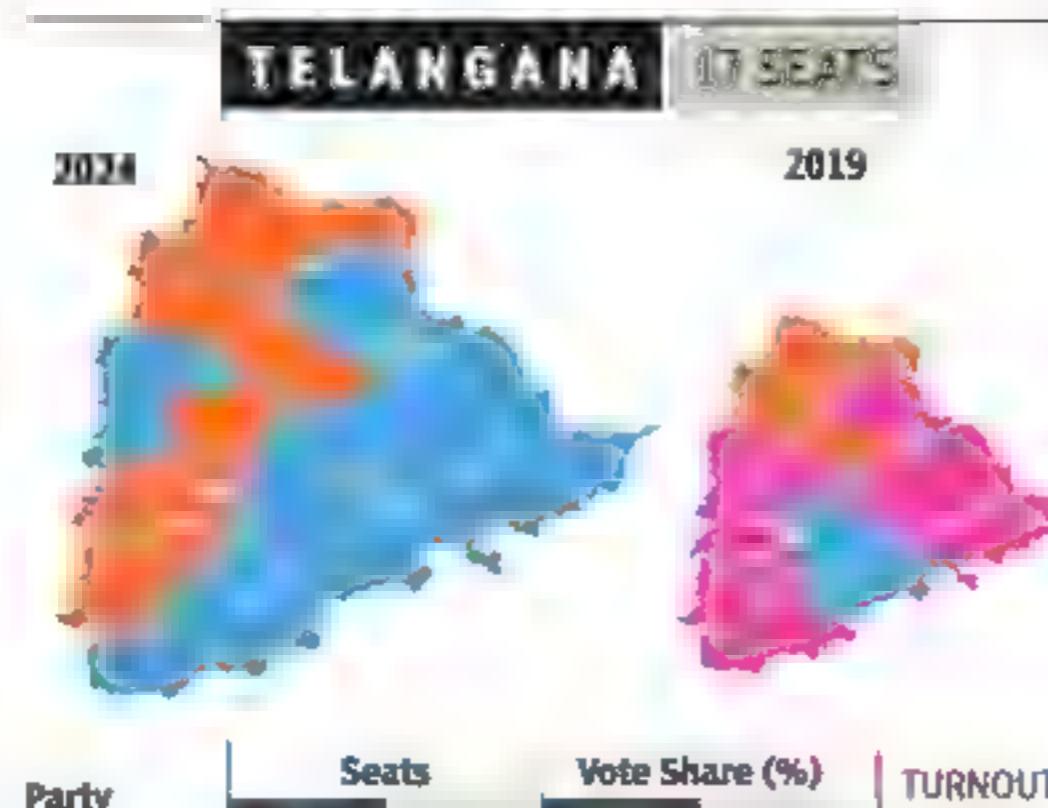


In T battle, saffron hue wipes out pink party; Cong's honeymoon continues

TEAM TOI

Hyderabad: For the first time since the formation of Telangana in 2014, Congress and BJP have become dominant political forces in the state, both sharing the spoils of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections with eight seats each of the 17 up for grabs. This was largely a result of a formidable force like the BRs being decimated.

BJP's performance is especially remarkable given that it had no traditional base here like Congress. The four seats it won in 2019 gave it hope of building a base in the southern states beyond Karnataka and the party started working towards making it a gateway to the south. BJP was eying 10 seats but managed eight. BJP had won only one seat in 2014 and four in 2019. While it retained four Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Se-



culderabad, it added Malajgiri, Chevella, Mahabubnagar and Medak to its tally. The saffron party swept the Greater Hyderabad region, leaving only Hyderabad

for Asaduddin Owaisi. Congress rode the honeymoon period it was enjoying since winning the assembly election in Dec last year. In 2014, it had got only two seats and three in 2019.

The Lok Sabha poll outcome strengthens chief minister A Reanth Reddy, who also heads the Telangana Congress unit. Reanth had openly declared that these results were a referendum on state govt's performance and projected it as a battle between Congress and BJP, while dismissing BRs as a 'fringe player.'

BRs had 11 seats in 2014 and nine in 2019 but drew a blank this time. This is the only election where the pink party could not win a single seat since its inception in 2001, losing even the Medak seat, which BRs supremo K Chandrashekar Rao had won in 2014.

Hyderabad: The last minute electoral patch-up with BJP and a return to the NDA fold has resulted in a windfall for TDP in Andhra Pradesh. It so brought forth the fact that TDP has always won big whenever it went to polls in alliance with other political parties in the past whether BJP, Jana Sena, Left, Janata Dal, BSP or Janata Party. Except for an occasion or two, TDP did not fight any poll without having an electoral understanding with others since its formation in 1982.

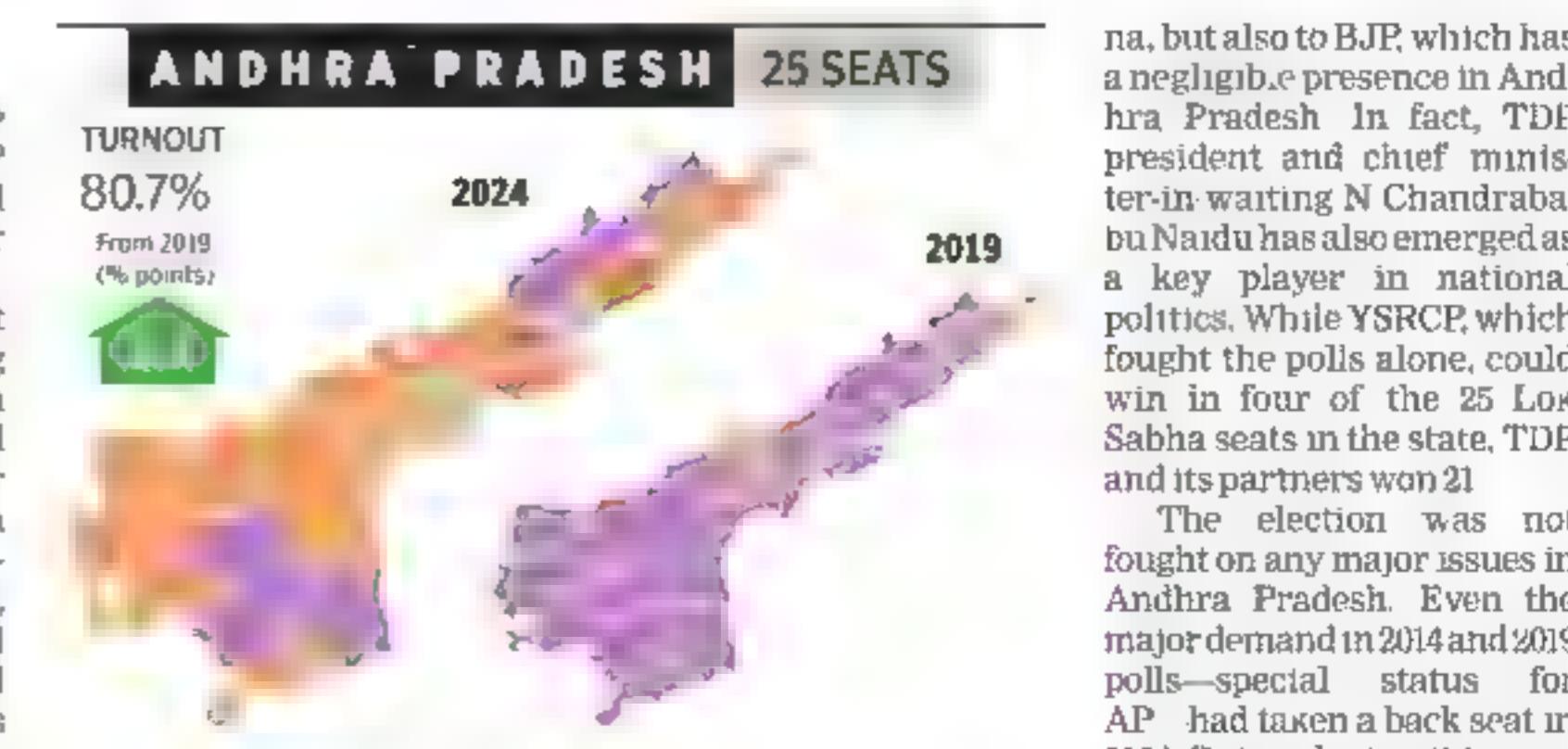
TDP, which parted ways with the BJP-led NDA in 2018, was virtually in political oblivion and was kept waiting by BJP national leader till the eleventh hour.

Like in the past, the poll alliance paid rich dividends not only to TDP and Jana Se-

na, but also to BJP, which has a negligible presence in Andhra Pradesh. In fact, TDP president and chief minister-in-waiting N Chandrababu Naidu has also emerged as a key player in national politics. While YSRCP, which fought the polls alone, could win four of the 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state, TDP and its partners won 21.

The election was not fought on any major issues in Andhra Pradesh. Even the major demand in 2014 and 2019 polls—special status for AP had taken a back seat in 2024. But a silent anti-incumbency wave and lack of visible development in the past five years were Jagan's undoing.

An over-confident YSRCP relegated Jagan's father, late YS Rajasekhara Reddy, to the back seat during the campaign, which also did not go down well with the voters.





Indian Political League

Medi's hat-trick bid was trickier than BJP would have liked it to be but hardhitters Nitish and Chandrababu came in handy. INDIA proved agile on the field, with a bowing array that spanned the feisty Rahul, wily Akhilesh, combative Mamata and steady Stalin.

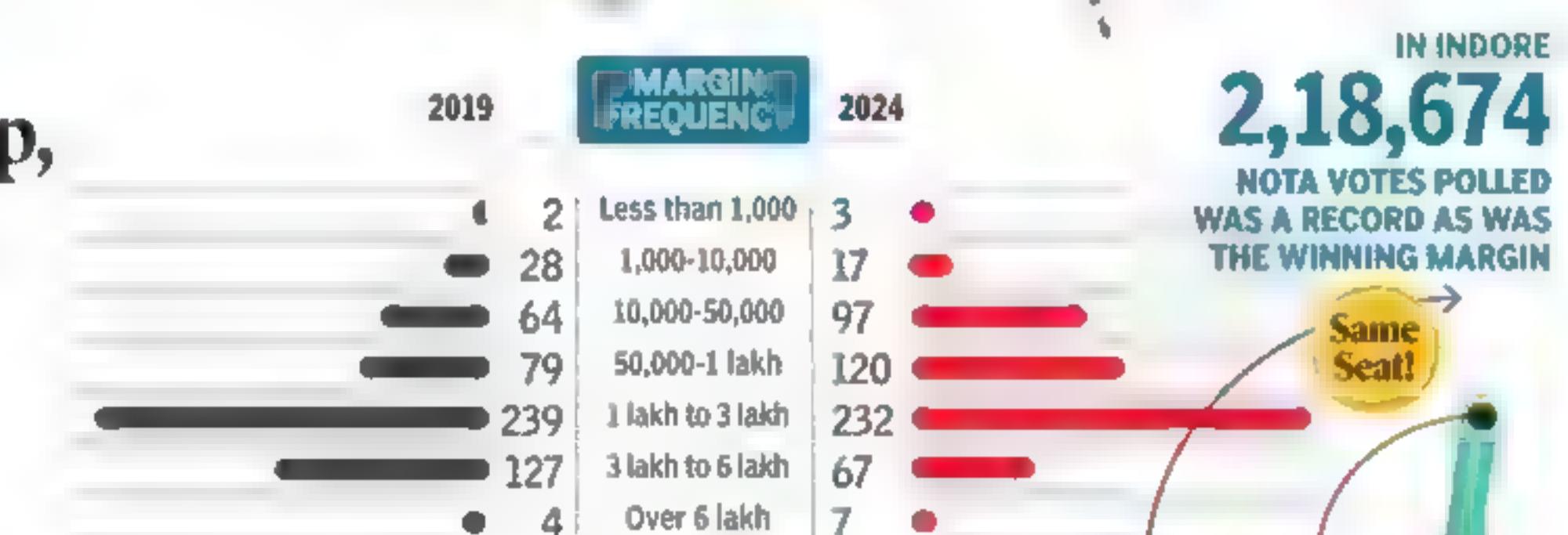


Illustrations: Uday Dub

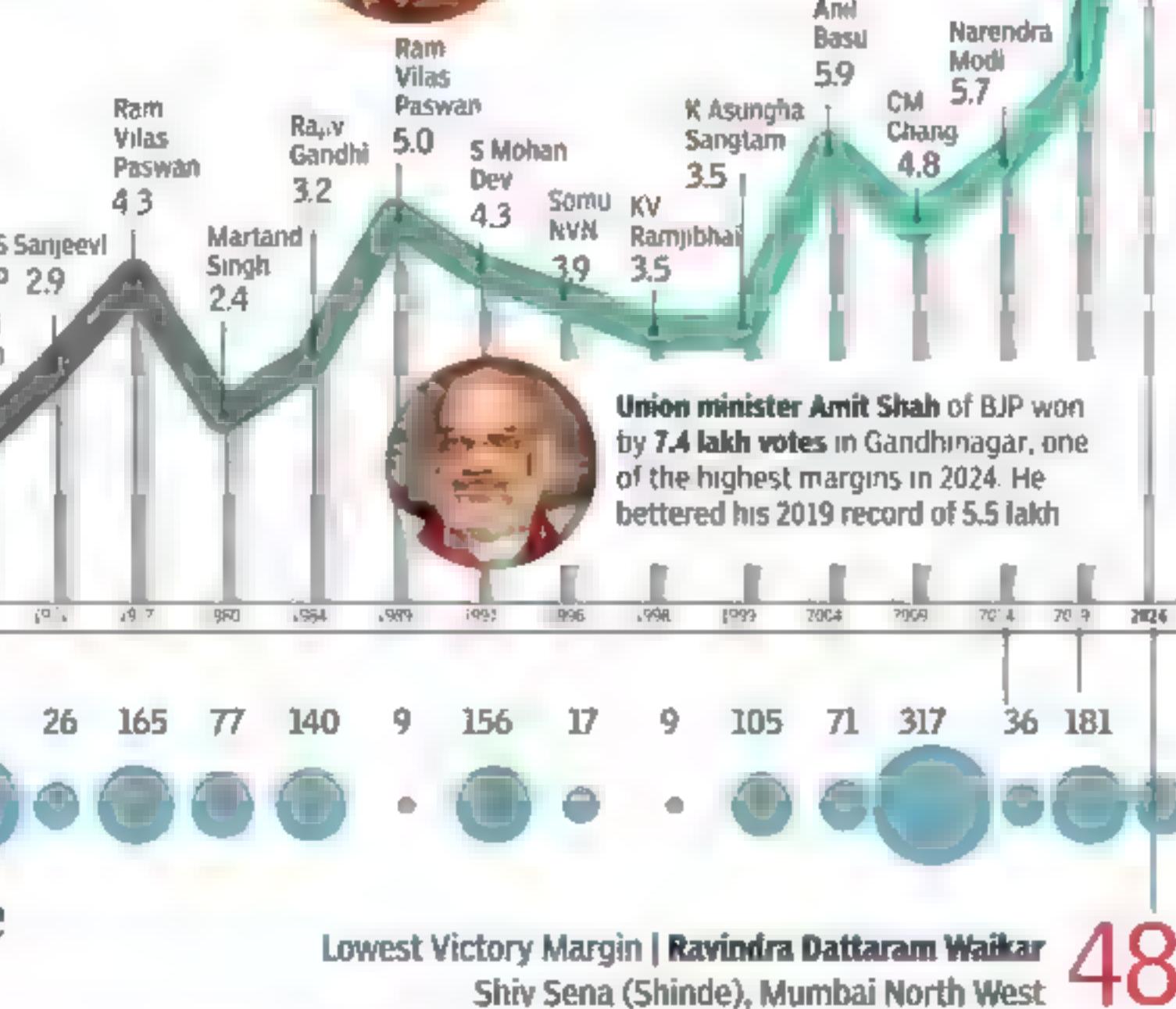
Impact Players

VICTORY MARGINS Big Wins Up, Record Set

Close contests, where the margin was less than 10,000 votes dipped over 2019, as did big winners who won by more than 3 lakh votes. One of the most exciting results was in Mumbai North West where the Sena (UBT) candidate was declared to have won by one vote before Ravindra Walker of Sena (Shinde) clinched it with 48 votes.



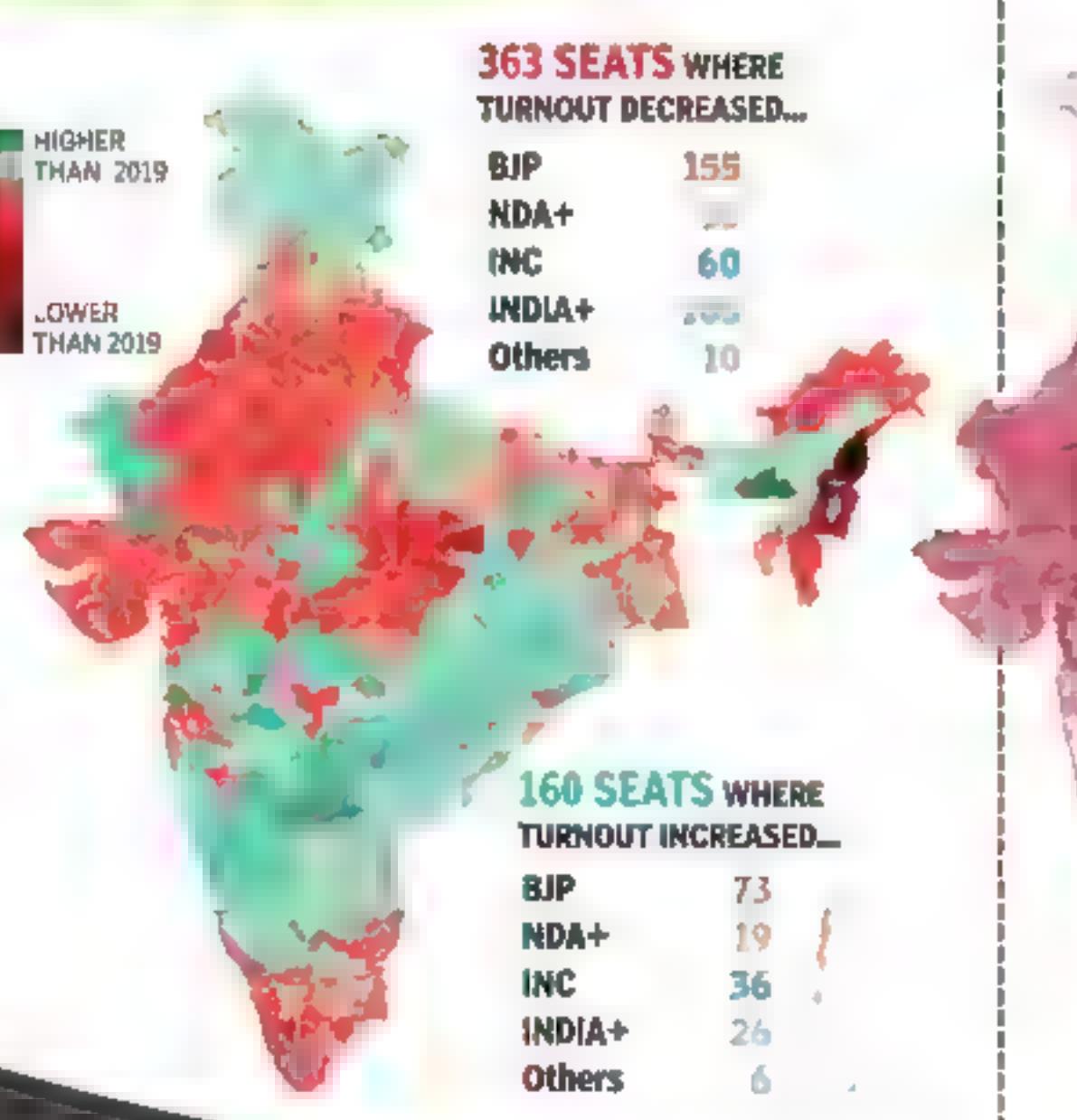
An increase in population and polling have led to victory margins rising over time



Crowd Support

VOTING TURNOUT Number Game

Turnouts repeatedly made headlines these elections, from low participation in the first few phases to allegations against EC of delaying release of final figures. The searing heatwave in the north affected polling percentages.



Stump Mike

Tempo To Biryani, 2024 Campaign In 9 Objects

From the useful washing machine to the ubiquitous tempo on the roads, some objects have been elevated politically this election season. An X-Ray, for instance, doesn't just show up bones and cracks; doctors want to see, but apparently, also the plot and party pad you don't particularly want the govt to see. TOI takes a look at innocuous articles that have been converted into campaign ammo.

Tempo To Biryani, 2024 Campaign In 9 Objects

The centrepiece of many a Bollywood climax scene, where it defeats everything from bull to biker to a formidable scaling device that, he claimed, would ensure a equitable society. Modiji countered by saying that the shetkada was planning a wealth X-ray. Also, there's no X-ray to tell us if fractured political landscape.

Tempo More over laudiced the new cash vehicle is here. But Modi's swine at the opposition that swoop full of currency notes were reaching them from Adam's rib. And so, the modi-verse became the mangalakuta, became the theme of many of Modi's speeches. The essence being, beware of those who will snatch the mangalakuta from your mothers, sisters and daughters. Countered by Priyanka Gandhi's emotional pitch of how her mother sacrificed her mangalakuta for the party. She also claimed to be very much the voters' hero.

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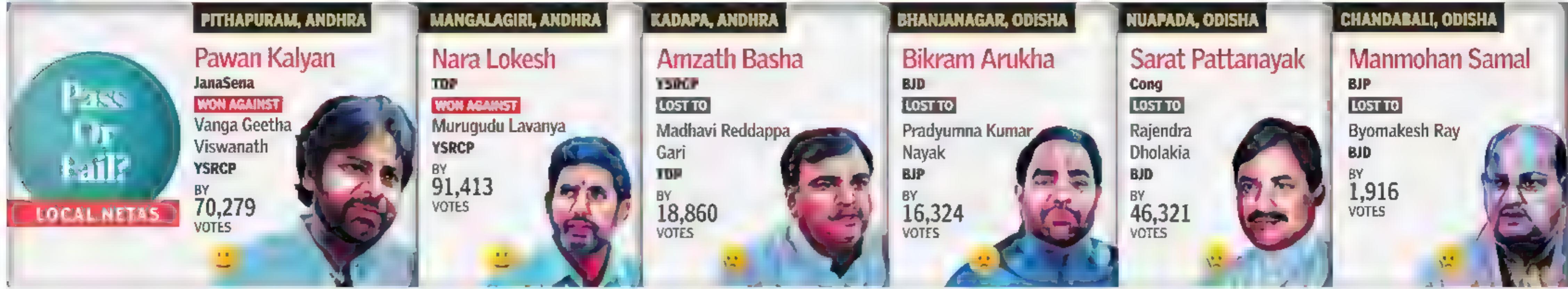
Yogi Adityanath Once the season of giving, UP's Covid toll of fatalities, over 80,000 people, was extended in Nov 2023, for years, with the hope that the two-year term would not cover. INDIA blared to up this by promising to double the ration (0.0kg) if it is voted to office, along with basic biogas and other freebies. Dalit-pawasi is not just comfort food for the voters, it is also a way to keep them from voting for the voters' hero.

PM Modi's Washi Machine Once the season of giving, UP's Covid toll of fatalities, over 80,000 people, was extended in Nov 2023, for years, with the hope that the two-year term would not cover. INDIA blared to up this by promising to double the ration (0.0kg) if it is voted to office, along with basic biogas and other freebies. Dalit-pawasi is not just comfort food for the voters, it is also a way to keep them from voting for the voters' hero.

No less than 25,000牛 drives left at bus stops, 2,500 obscene videos and midnight flight fights. The RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav's fan try on the fabulatu mutant hybrid. RJD found ready material of its campaign missile. Tejaswi was received as insensitive to women and children, and as a non-vegetarian. Particular Navratri. Haryana questioned the low IQ of BJP voters who were campaigning as he was for the votes of Nishad. The caste traditionalism of fishing in Bihar. The next source of political discourse: UP CM Yogi Adityanath and PM Modi saying Congress would be loyal to terrorists if voted to office.

Samvidhan: A rare occurrence, all parties are on the same page on this one. They want to change it, we don't. And everybody is saying it, never mind from who. What INDIA bloc alleged that BJP was aiming for 400-plus seats so that they could remove the provision for reservation in the constitution. The saffron party will back saying app govt had already violated the Constitution by introducing religion-based reservation. Never has the Goward been pandered about so much.





AP hits refresh button, TDP halts Jagannaut

TEAM TOI

N Chandrababu Naidu is set to create history by becoming the first chief minister of Andhra Pradesh to get a fourth term with his landslide victory in the assembly elections. His father-in-law and TDP founder NT Rama Rao had got three terms in united Andhra Pradesh.

Naidu also registered his eighth assembly win, making him the most senior politician in the state assembly.

The results saw another piece of history in making outgoing CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy losing the status of the leader of opposition in the new assembly as his party YSRCP could not win the minimum 18 seats to get the status. In 1994, Congress, like the YSRCP this time, had lost the status of leader of opposition. NTR was then sworn in as the CM for the third time.

The results mirrored the outcome of the 2019 polls with the TDP now taking the position of YSRCP-TDP and its alliance partners, BJP and Jana Sena, have together now bagged 164 of the 175 assembly seats leaving just 11 to YSRCP. Of these, TDP bagged 135. In contrast, YSRCP had won 151 in the 2019 election.

An analysis of three different regions, Rayalaseema, and south and north coastal Andhra, reveals that a silent anti-incumbency factor coupled with a shift in the traditional vote bank (Muslims, Christians and Dalits) of YSRCP resulted in a big victory for the TDP-led alliance.

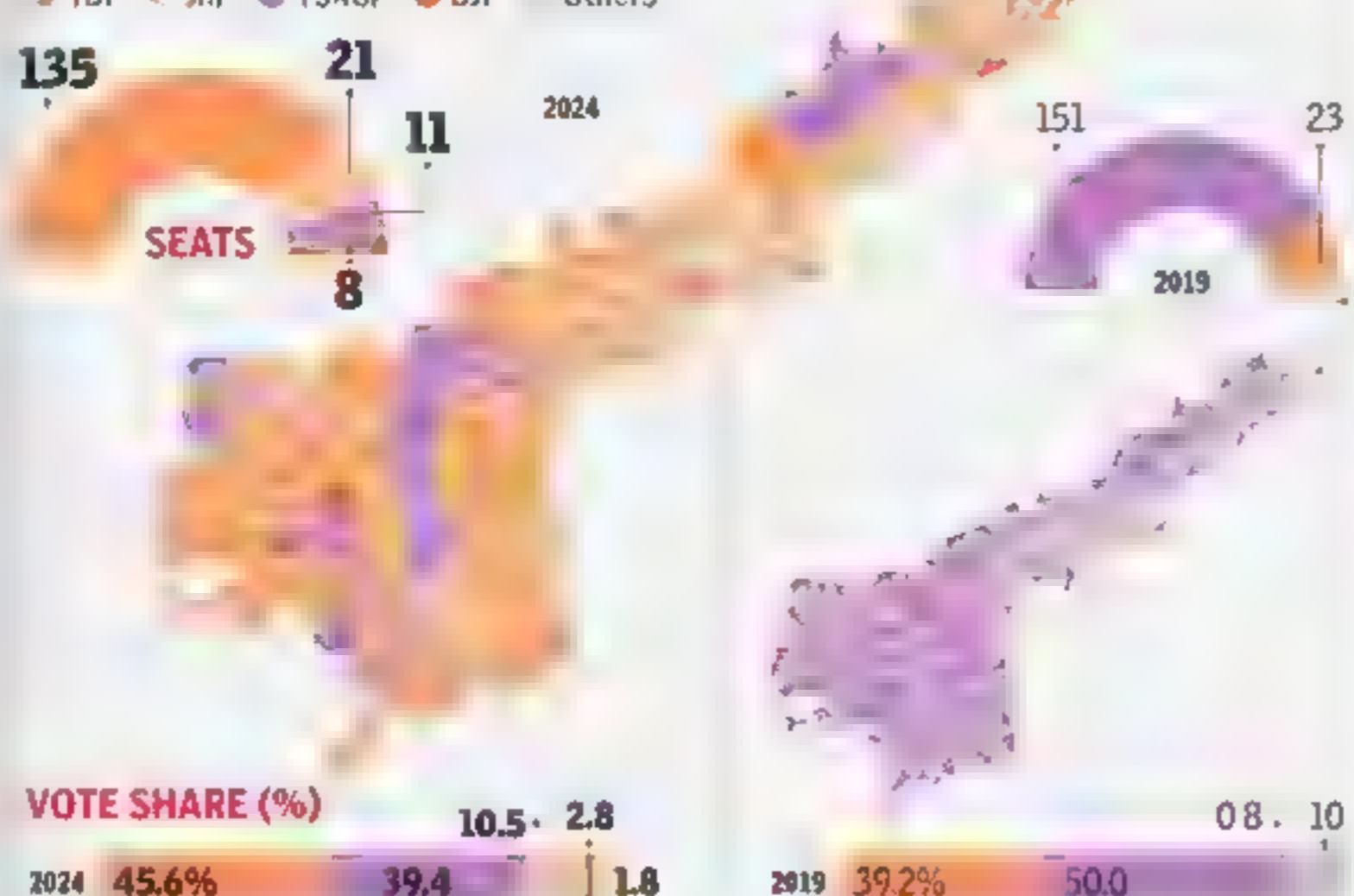
Factors like super six promises of the TDP including free bus travel for women, increase in monthly pensions to the elderly and widows from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000, alliance with the BJP and Jana Sena, padayatra by his son and TDP leader Nara Lokesh and arrest of Naidu in the alleged skill development scam by the Jagan govt too worked in TDP's favour. Near inaccessibility of Jagan to even his own MPs and MLAs, lack of a development narrative in major cities and

175 SEATS

A Total Swap Out

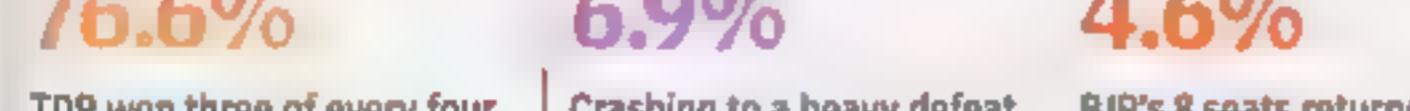
Andhra Pradesh gave a resounding mandate to Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP with its allies, like JanaSena, also breezing home with handsome pickings.

● TDP ● JnP ● YSRCP ● BJP ● Others



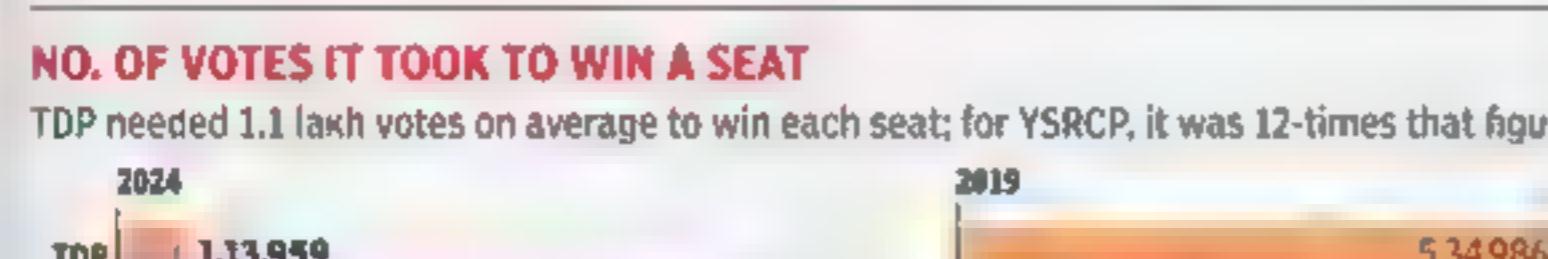
VOTE SHARE (%)

SHARE OF CONTESTED SEATS WON



NO. OF VOTES IT TOOK TO WIN A SEAT

TDP needed 1.1 lakh votes on average to win each seat; for YSRCP, it was 12-times that figure



overconfidence in the party leadership, went against YSRCP. The results highlighted that women and working classes backed TDP despite YSRCP claiming that it had extended financial benefits to these sections of society.

TDP has never won such massive electoral support in the last three decades. The only time the party came close to such a landslide was in 1994 when NTR won 216 of the 254 assembly seats. Such was the endorsement by voters this ti-

me that YSRCP lost all but two of its ministers — Jagan and P Ramachandra Reddy.

YSRCP lost the base even in places considered as its bastion — mainly in Rayalaseema. That the Kapu community vote bank stood firmly behind TDP is evident from the outcome in undivided East and West Godavari districts, where Kapus are numerically strong.

The assembly elections also saw the emergence of film actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan as a new political force.

The party had struggled for 10 years to stay afloat but this time it made it big at the hustings — both assembly (won 21 seats) and Lok Sabha (two). Pawan had lost from the two places he contested in 2019. This time, the 55-year-old won big from Pithapuram.

BJP, which has negligible political base in AP, struck rich thanks to the alliance. It won seven assembly and three Lok Sabha seats. As in 2014 and 2019 polls, the Congress failed to open its account in the state

CEO Naidu books corner office in Andhra & Centre

Srikanth.Aluri@timesgroup.com



CAKEWALK: N Chandrababu Naidu celebrates with son and TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh and family members

He has seen it all — from a student leader to chief minister to kingmaker of central govs to being pushed into political wilderness and even to jail in an alleged corruption case. But the latest victory in Andhra Pradesh must be the most satisfying for N Chandrababu Naidu, the tech-savvy 'CEO' in a long time.

After winning the 2019 assembly polls, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his YSRCP cadres tried to relegate Naidu to merely a Kamma community leader by attracting other communities with welfare schemes. But in the past year, Naidu not only managed to break free of the shackles, he also stitched together an alliance with BJP and actor Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena — a consolidated caste bloc against YSRCP.

With AP having bifurcated and left with only 25 MP seats (42 before), and BJP forming govt at Centre on its own post 2014, Naidu could not dictate terms to the Union govt as in the past. His vision for a greenfield world class capital city for AP in Amaravati to compete with Hyderabad could not fructify. As a result, TDP lost the 2019 polls and had just three MPs and 23 MLAs.

Naidu had revolted against NT Rama Rao over the latter's second wife Lakshmi Parvati's increasing influence in TDP affairs. Many MLAs backed the move and elected Naidu as their leader. After the successful intra-party coup, Naidu became the

Jagan 'splurge' fails to dole out YSRCP win

Sandani.MN@timesgroup.com

Do doles do what netas want them to do? Not always. That's what YS Jagan Mohan Reddy learnt the hard way. Chandrababu Naidu swept away all hopes of a rerun by outgoing Andhra CM Jagan who was riding on the massive spending on a slew of welfare schemes. Now, they have not only left YSRCP in the dumps, the schemes have crippled AP's economy too.

While the people seemed clearly not content with 'doles', Jagan's narrative on class war — that the polls in Andhra Pradesh were fought between the poor led by YSRCP and feudal forces fed by TDP — escalated tempers, prompting many electors to take the side of 'development' and vote him out.

Jagan, who marched to power in 2019 following a historic padayatra, was accused of rarely coming out of his bungalow to meet people. Even his ministers and legislators complained he was not accessible.

His social engineering experiments, too, distanced the party's strong voters from the influential caste groups. He blocked 50% of the posts in the nominated boards, corporations, temple and market committees for SC, ST, BC, and minorities. He also brought women into the 50% reservation bracket in the nominated posts.

Jagan's village/ward volunteer system to deliver govt schemes at the doorsteps of beneficiaries seemed to have boomeranged as party functionaries and cadres were kept out of this mechanism. They did not have any role and left upset.

Patnaik makes way for neo-naveen

Ashot.Pradhan@timesgroup.com

He could have etched his name in the annals of India's electoral history as the country's longest-serving CM if he had, yet again, won the polls in Odisha this time. But Naveen Patnaik — the man who is said to have been a reluctant politician who had no intention to join politics after his father Biju Patnaik's death 27 years ago — missed the milestone by a whisker.

Trumped by BJP after close to two-and-a-half decades at the helm, Naveen fell short of former Sikkin chief minister Pawan Chamling's term of 24 years and 165 days. He could have gone past the post in Aug.

People did not endorse Naveen's populist measures, like cash incentives for farmers, youth and women, besides the promise of free electricity for middle class. His governance model and work in health, education and women empowerment failed him was not accessible.

The Odisha upset also puts a question mark on the acceptability of VK Pandian, who was considered by many as Naveen's successor. An entire generation in their 40s and below, who have only seen Naveen's govt since they voted for the first time, will see a new brand of politics now.



MILESTONE MISSED: Naveen Patnaik

led to boost party's prospects.

Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, which the BJD projected as superior to and more inclusive than the Centre's Ayushman Bharat, failed to make a mark. BJP had been criticising Naveen for not implementing the central scheme and "depriving" the people of Odisha of its benefits.

The Odisha upset also puts a question mark on the acceptability of VK Pandian, who was considered by many as Naveen's successor. An entire generation in their 40s and below, who have only seen Naveen's govt since they voted for the first time, will see a new brand of politics now.

The fall guy: Will party pander to Pandian now?

Ashot.Pradhan@timesgroup.com

One of BJP's creative social media campaigns included a mock airline ticket for IAS officer VK Pandian, 'booked' from Bhubaneswar to Tamil Nadu on the fictitious 'BJDGQ' airlines for June 4.

While the Tamil Nadu born IAS-turned-politician may not leave his 'karmabhoomi' Odisha, he definitely finds himself at a political crossroads following BJP's massive poll debacle — both in the Lok Sabha and assembly polls — in Odisha.

Pandian's much-touted position as a key figure within the BJD has come under scrutiny. The party's disappointing showing has led to speculation about his political trajectory and the impact it may have on his influence within the organization.

Pandian had announced he would quit politics if BJD failed to return to power with a three-fourth majority.

He had dared Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan to adopt a similar stand if he lost. If Pandian does that, his political career would span just six months since he joined BJD in Nov last year after taking voluntary retirement from the services. Pandian drew his strength from Naveen Patnaik's unfaltering faith in him.

But now, many BJD functionaries who had remained silent may speak out. They may question his acceptability and role within the party. On the eve of the last-phase polls, Naveen had hurriedly announced Pandian will not succeed him.

A new 'pradhan' in Odisha soon?

Ashot.Pradhan@timesgroup.com

With BJP securing majority to form its first govt in Odisha, Union home minister Ashok Pradhan has emerged as the top contender for the CM's job.

Pradhan, 54, a postgraduate from Utkal University, has been a key lieutenant of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shah in the past decade and is BJP's most prominent face in the eastern coastal state.

The manifesto that Shah credited Pradhan with, is one of the key factors that swung the result BJP's way, with its promise of buying paddy at Rs 3,100 per quintal, cash voucher of Rs 50,000 to women under Subhadra Yojana and fight for Odia asmita.

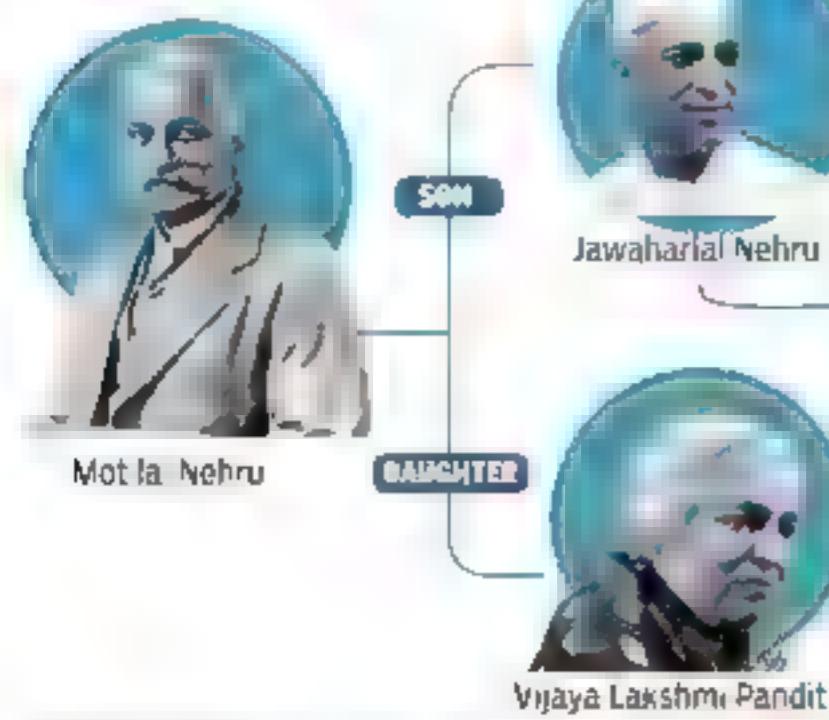
And, it's not just the manifesto. Pradhan joined forces with Modi and Shah to highlight two other issues that

provided ammunition in BJP's fight attack on IAS turned politician VK Pandian as an outsider and the emotive issue of "missing keys" to sacred Ratna Bhandar (treasure trove) at the Puri Jagannath Temple.

In 2019, he played the lead role in managing BJP's poll strategy this time too, including overseeing day-to-day affairs in the run-up to polls, apart from drawing up the manifesto.

UTTAR PRADESH

Nehru-Gandhis



PUNJAB

Royal Family of Patiala



Badals



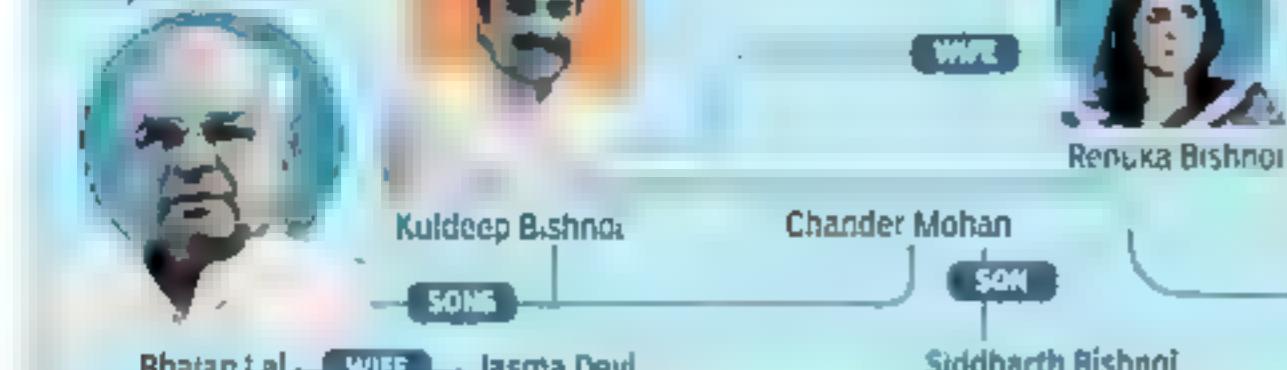
Kairons

Partap Singh Kairon (former CM of Punjab), Surinder Singh Kairon (son of Partap Singh), Adesh Partap Singh Kairon (grand son of Partap Singh)

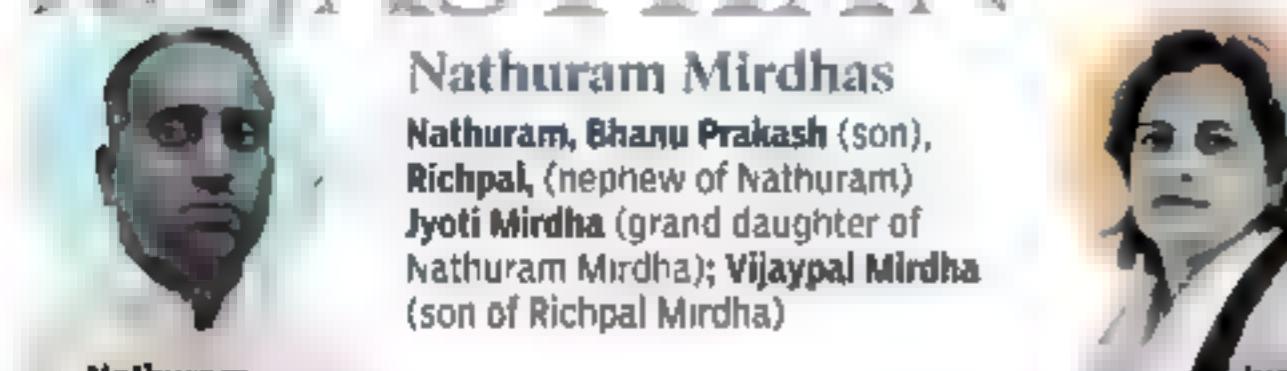
HARYANA



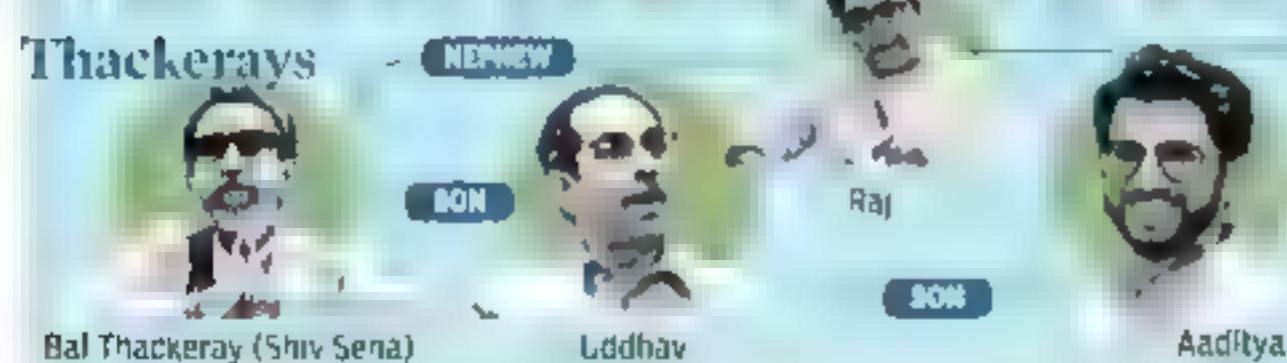
Bhajan Lal



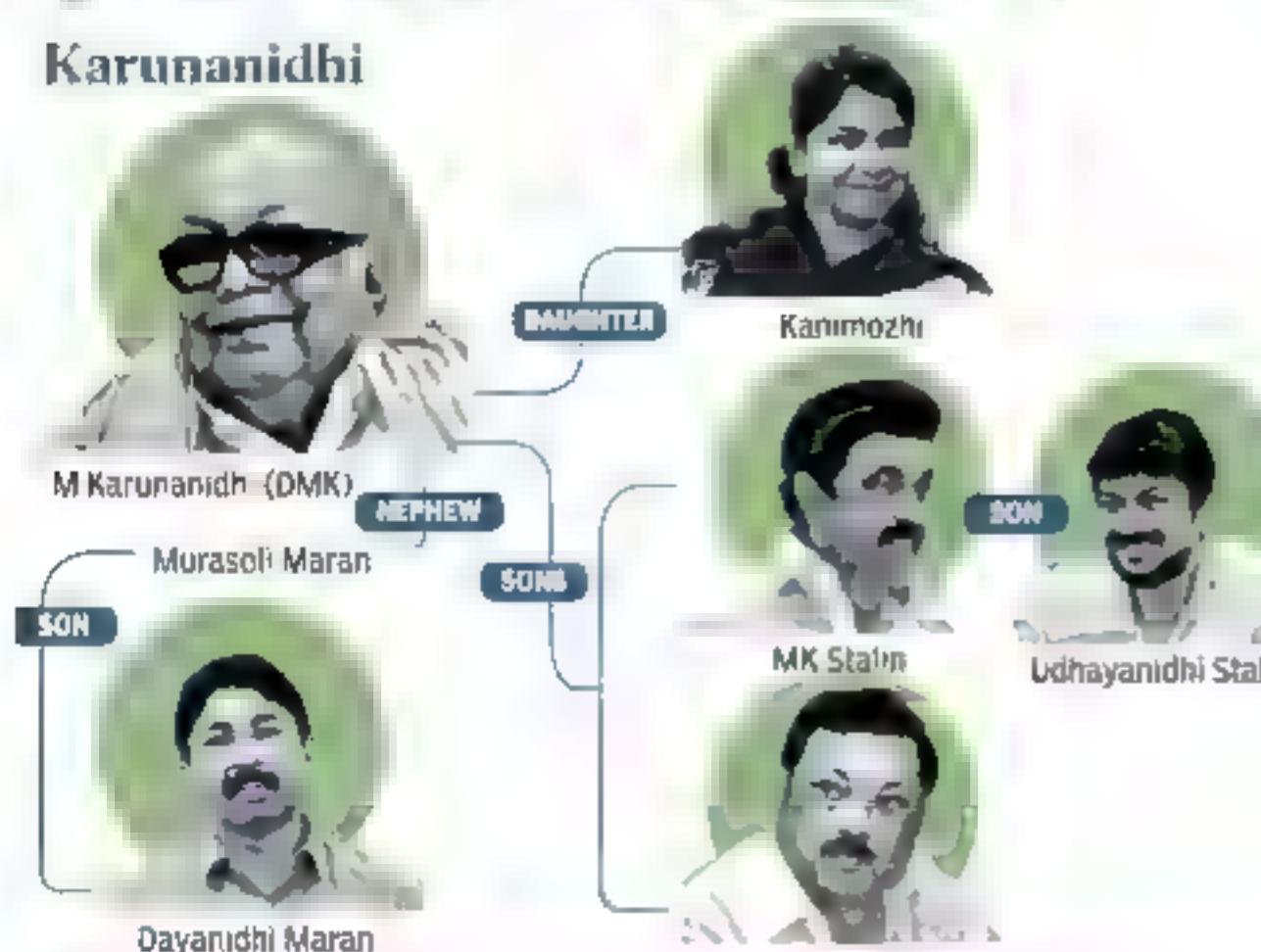
RAJASTHAN



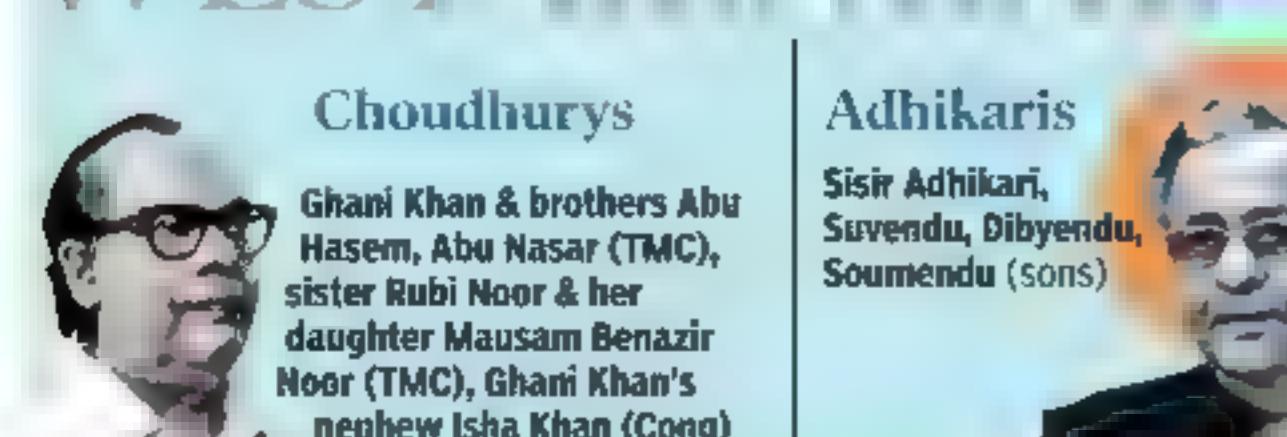
MAHARASHTRA



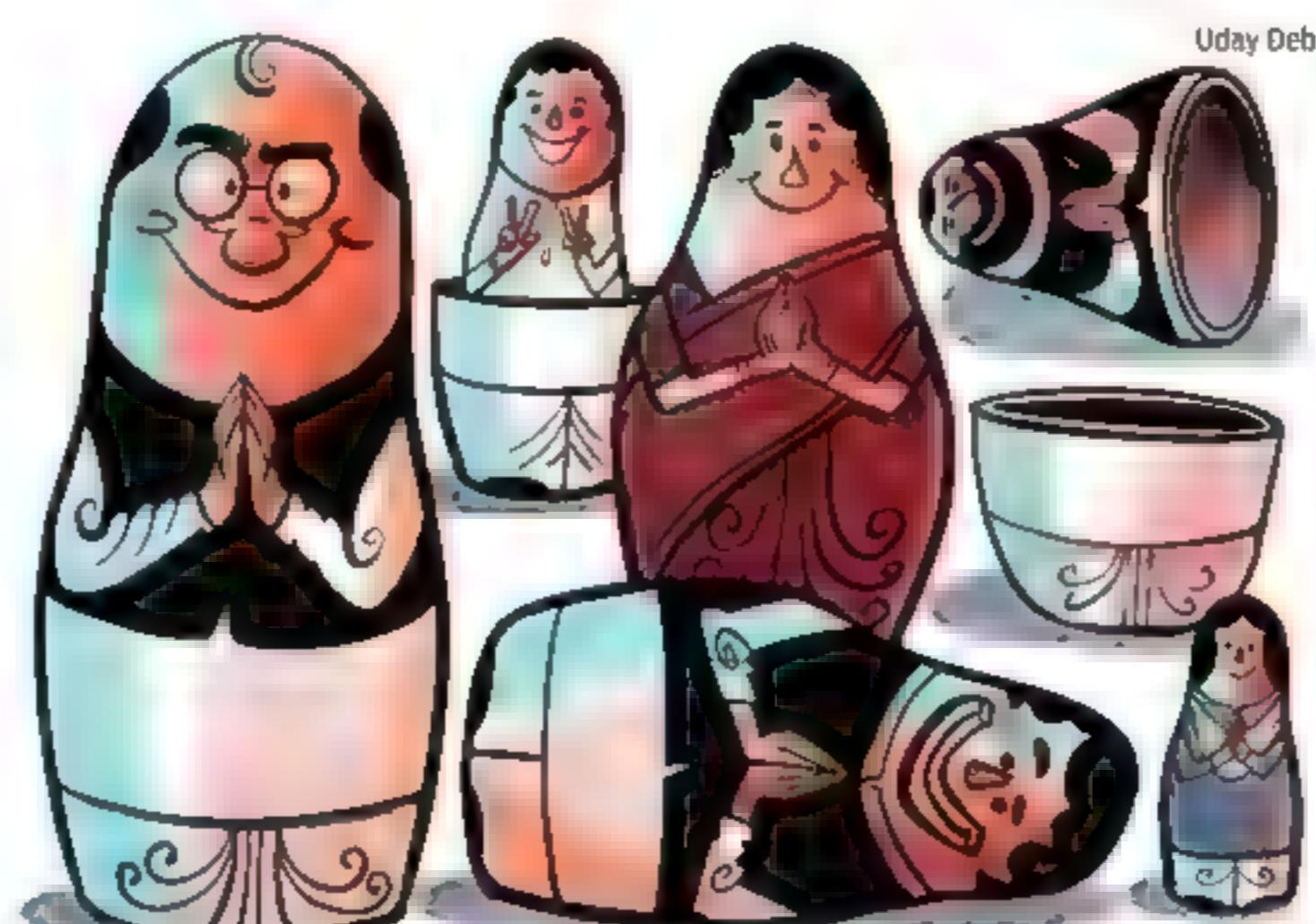
TAMIL NADU



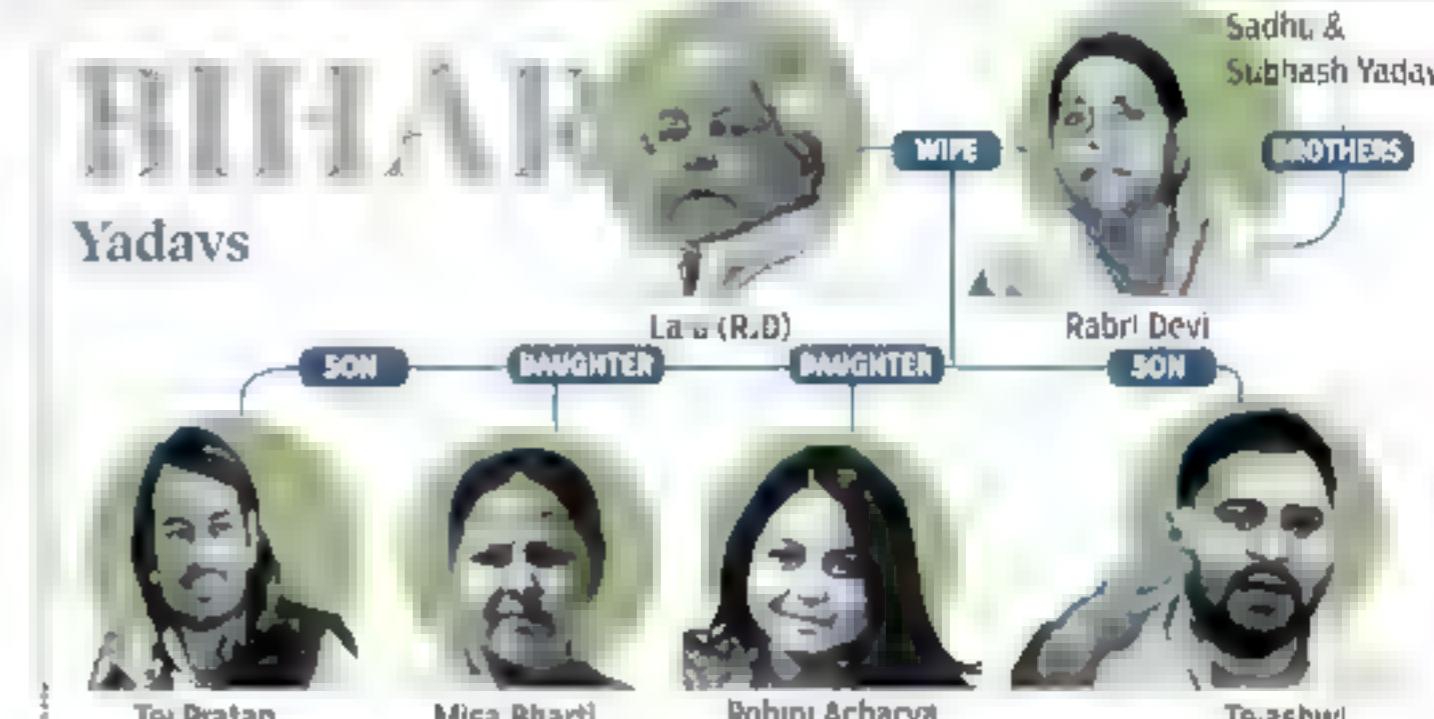
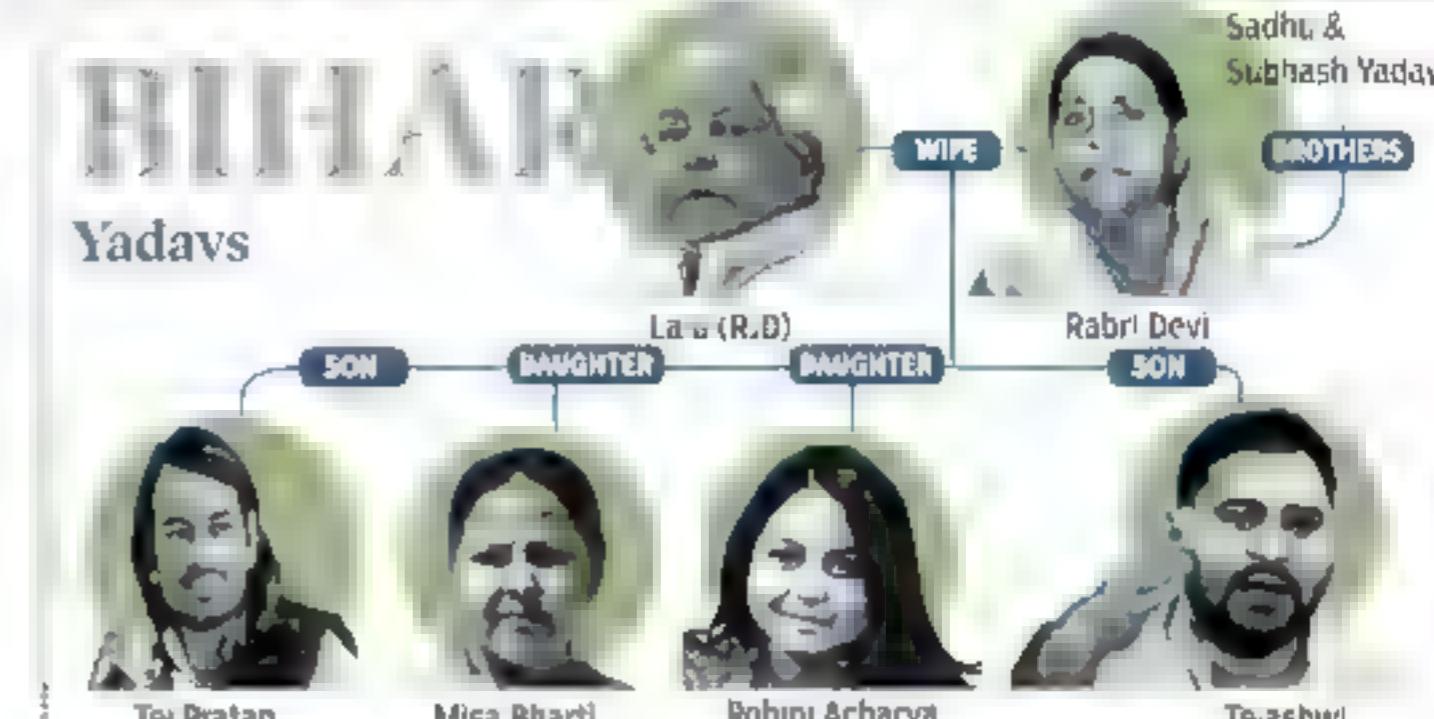
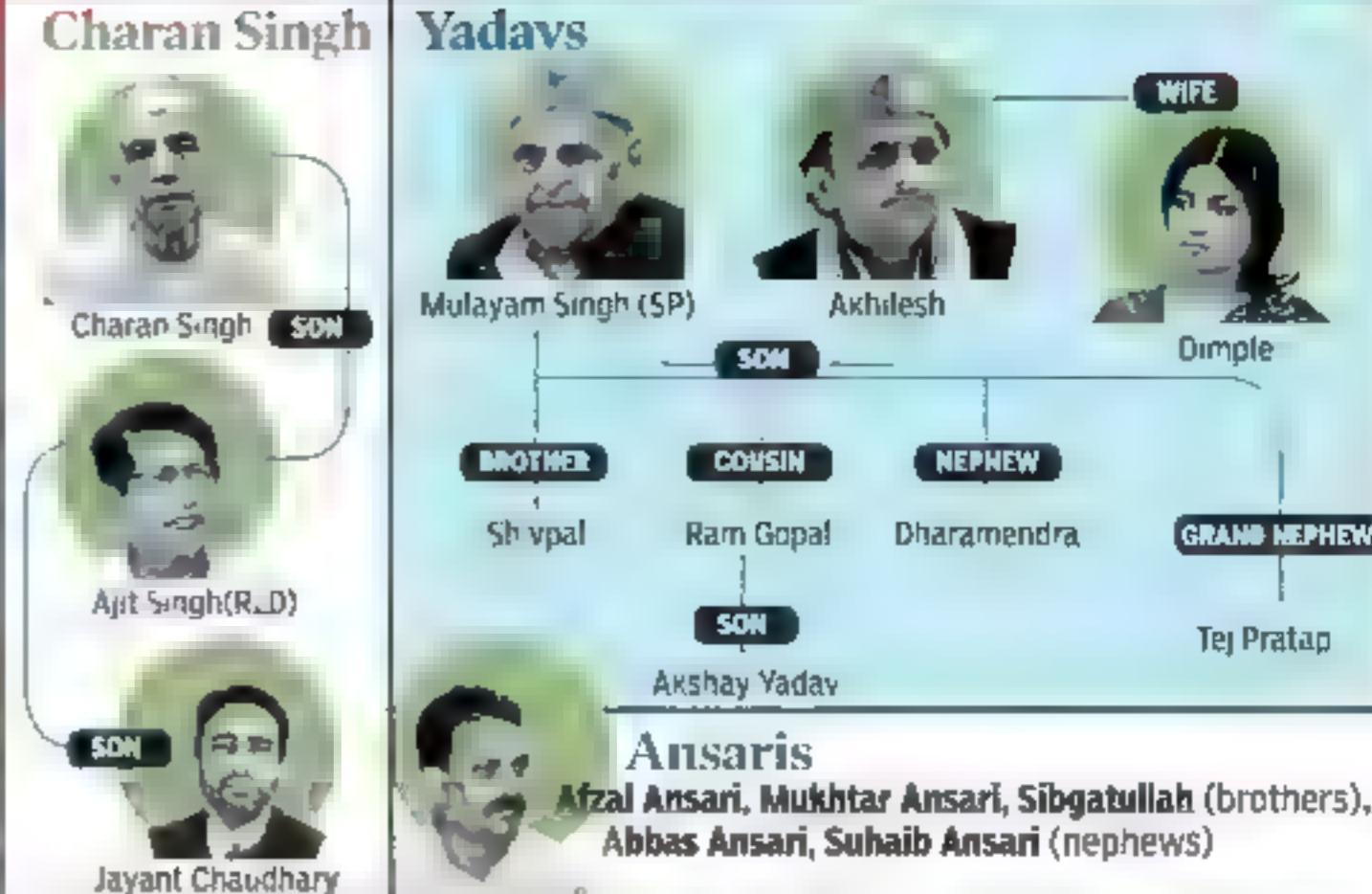
WEST BENGAL

Parivars
in Politics

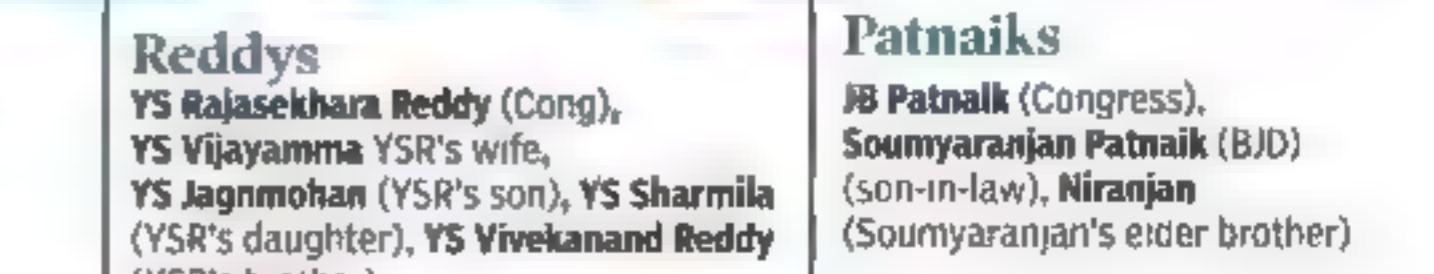
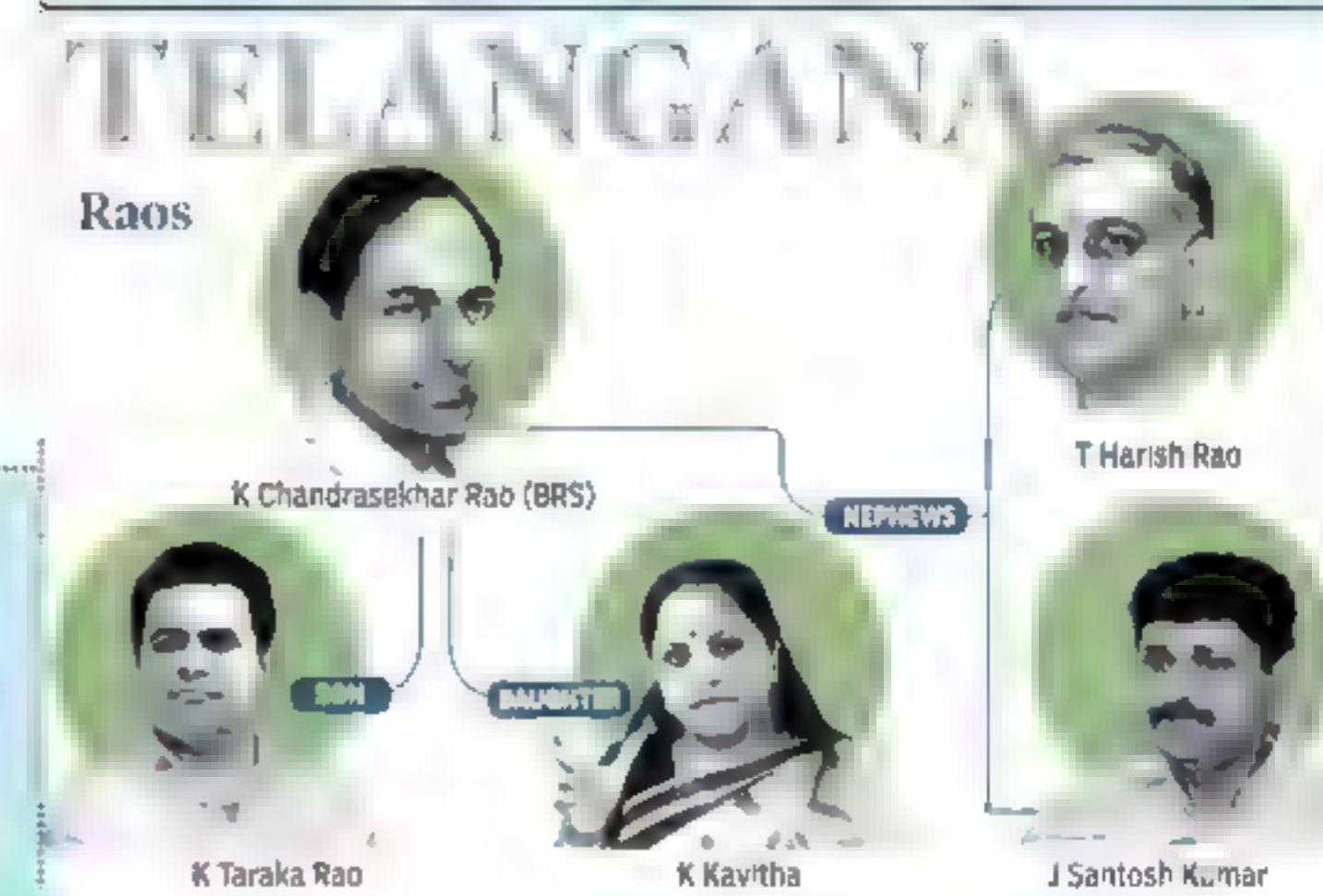
The politics of a country of now 137 crore people has been dominated by a few dynasties. What do Rahul Gandhi, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Nakul Kamal Nath, Sukhbir Badal, Supriya Sule and Vaibhav Gehlot have in common? They represent one of **nearly 75 prominent political families** (and this is not an exhaustive count) across the spectrum – barring the Left – found by TOI's inhouse research



All state-level political families and several two-generation families (e.g. Pilots of Rajasthan or Bahugunas of UP) were excluded for reasons of space



Mishras
Lalit Narayan Mishra, Vijay Kumar Mishra (JD) son, Jagannath Mishra (Cong), (Brother of Lalit Narayan Mishra), Rishi Mishra (JD) son of Vijay Kumar Mishra



Chavans
Shankarrao Chavan, Ashok Chavan, son (Former CM of Maharashtra)

Reddys
YS Rajasekhara Reddy (Cong),
YS Vijayamma YSR's wife,
YS Jagmohan (YSR's son),
YS Sharmila (YSR's daughter),
YS Vivekanand Reddy (YSR's brother)

Patnaiks
JB Patnaik (Congress),
Soumyaranjan Patnaik (BJD)
(son-in-law), Niranjan
(Soumyaranjan's elder brother)

Deos
Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo
(Swatantra Party), grandsons
Kailesh and Arakesh (BJD),
Rajendra's brother's son K V Singh
Deo (BJP), KV's wife Sangeeta (BJP)

Satpathys
Nandini Satpathy
Tathagatha Satpathy

Muftis
Mohammad Sayeed (PDP)
Mehbooba
Iltaqbal
Irtqa Iqba

MP/RAJASTHAN

Scindias
Vijayraje Scindia, Yashodhara Raje, Vasundhara Raje

Bansi Lals
Bansi Lal, Ranveer Singh Mahendra, Shreya Chaudhary

Pawars
Sharad Pawar (NCP), Supriya Sule, Ajit Pawar, Parth Pawar, Sunetra Pawar

Rao

NT Rama Rao (TDP), Nandamuri Harikrishna and Nandamuri Balakrishna, NTR's sons, Daggubati Purandeswari, NTR's daughter, Daggubati Venkateswara Rao, NTR's son-in-law, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, NTR's son-in-law

Deve Gowdas
Anitha Kumaraswamy, HD Deve Gowda, Revanna, Prajwa Revanna

Reddys
Ramalinga Reddy, Sowmya Reddy (daughter)

Patils
Siddaramaogouda, Shivananda Patil (son), Samyukta Patil

Jarkiholi
Laxma Rao, Satish, Balachandra, Ramesh Bhimashi Jarkiholi, Lakham (sons)

Solankis
Madhavsinh Solanki (Former CM), Bharat Solanki (Former MP)

Abdullahs
Begum Akhtar Jehan, Sheikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah (NC)

Chaudharys
Amar Singh Chaudhary, Tushar Chaudhary

Choudhury
Ghani Khan & brothers Abu Hasem, Abu Nasar (TMC), sister Rubi Noor & her daughter Mausam Benazir Noor (TMC), Ghani Khan's nephew Isha Khan (Cong)

Adhikaris
Sisir Adhikari, Suvidha, Dibyendu, Soumendra (sons)

Yediyurappas
BS Yediyurappa, BV Vijayendra and BY Raghavendra (sons of BSY)

Gogois
Dip, Tarun Gogoi, Gaurav

Bommais
SR Bommai, Basavaraj Bommai

Reddys
Ramalinga Reddy, Sowmya Reddy (daughter)

Patils
Siddaramaogouda, Shivananda Patil (son), Samyukta Patil

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Adhikaris
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Politics Returns To The Old Normal

BJP's coalition govt must read the verdict right: basics matter

India's voters can't be taken for granted. An election where the outcome was widely held to be a foregone conclusion, has given a result with many surprises, overturning many assumptions. None of the takeaways is brand new to Indian politics. But they were quite unexpected in 2024.

End of exceptionalism | After a decade of single-party dominance, which led to successive majority verdicts in elections characterised by a pan-India theme, LS 2024 reverted to an earlier pattern. There wasn't a single overriding issue that animated the electorate. Neither did candidates fade into near-irrelevance in a presidential type of contest. In that sense, LS polls went back to being normal and should lead to the restoration of democracy's checks and balances.

Coalitions and allies matter | This is a natural extension of a return to the old way. Smartly constructed alliances worked well for both BJP and Congress. The best examples for the two parties were AP and UP, respectively. Conversely, avoiding an alliance with BJD in Odisha helped BJP cross a frontier in the state.

For the first time since 2009, a new govt will be a coalition. Unlike the last two occasions, allies cannot be brushed aside. They will have a say in critical decisions. Managing inconsistent demands from allies will be a skill that will have to take centre stage again. Therefore, we are now unlikely to see hugely disruptive decisions introduced at short notice. But that doesn't preclude the likelihood of reforms, as coalition govt's earlier have carried out significant changes.

Messaging and reality need to be in sync | A look back at BJP's campaign shows that the stated target of exceeding 400 seats didn't age well. Not only did it smack of taking the electorate for granted, but it may have also introduced a sense of complacency. Moreover, it provided opposition a tactical opening to stoke anxieties about the Constitution and reservation. The BJP messaging clearly didn't hit home. GOI's jobs data shows that the benefits of high GDP growth have simply not percolated down. When Modi and BJP talked up their performance, it was out of sync with what the electorate was experiencing. If there's a lesson here, it's that the messaging needs to be close to ground reality. More so, when there's no overriding emotive theme.

INDIA's tactical shrewdness | This was a coalition that seemed to be falling apart in the months leading up to the election. When one of its catalysts, Nitish, suddenly switched over to NDA, it seemed to symbolise the fragility of INDIA. It didn't help that in Bengal TMC chose to go it alone.

Notwithstanding early setbacks, INDIA played its cards well. In UP it defied all odds. A state that was regarded as BJP's trump card turned out to be its weakness. That was the case in Maharashtra too, giving INDIA a huge boost in the two largest states. In both states, the alliance played a tactically smart game. It sidestepped BJP's strength – Modi's popularity – and stuck to local issues. As the campaign progressed, it began to have a more pronounced effect, and eastern UP turned in big gains for SP.

Welfare and jobs | Welfare packages are now fairly standardised across political parties. Cash transfers to women, concessions on electricity consumption and subsidised or even free cereals are common to most manifestos and state govt's. One takeaway from this election is that welfare packages, on their own, do not deliver. One example is AP where YSRCP received a drubbing in assembly and LS elections despite generous welfare measures. Even GOI had an extensive welfare package, underpinned by free cereals since 2020.

Voters have clearly indicated that jobs and economic aspirations matter. India's macroeconomic parameters are sound, and its economy is growing fast. However, unless this translates into greater opportunity for a burgeoning youth population and a belief that upward mobility is within grasp, a party in govt will be in trouble. The economic message from the results is that jobs matter.

New Reality For Modi Sarkar: Play Nice

Lok Sabha elections have given BJP-led NDA a weak mandate to govern. BJP has received its biggest jolt since 2014, having been humbled in its bastion of UP and many other sub-regions of west and north India. It no longer has a majority of its own, brought down by its own hubris. Gains elsewhere were not enough to compensate for the losses in its strongholds.

The second big losers are the exit pollsters, who clearly suffered from confirmation biases and got their numbers badly wrong. In particular, their projections in UP, Maharashtra and Bengal were way off the mark. The other losers are candidates who did not belong to either BJP or opposition alliances. Gains made by INDIA bloc came not just at the cost of BJP but also third party candidates. India has become a two-front polity once more, as it was between 1998 and 2014, even though BJP has expanded its core vote base under Modi.

But the big reality is reputational damage done to Modi. In a party used to giving him all credit for victories in the past, BJP's inability to even get a simple majority of its own cannot but weaken him politically, both inside his own party and in NDA. He cannot now govern with a PMO-centred decision-making apparatus. Of course, there is a chance that many new MPs (and smaller parties) can be enticed into BJP to give it more comfortable numbers in Parliament, but these numbers will be unstable.

Congress and its alliance parties will be cock-a-hoop, having finally broken the jinx of the last decade and scoring wins in many parts of north and west India, including Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and UP. Mamata Banerjee's TMC has delivered a huge defeat to BJP in Bengal. AAP will be less thrilled, having had to cede seats to its 'ally' Congress in Punjab. A resurgent SP will emerge as a big challenger to BJP in UP, posing problems for the double-engine sarkar.

Consolation prizes for BJP came from Telangana and Odisha. Seat gains in Andhra Pradesh were largely because it made the right decision to ally with TDP and

Jana Sena, while mere vote share gains in Kerala and Tamil Nadu suggest that it is still not quite among the top contenders there.

Clearly, BJP was too cocky, but it also made huge errors of commission. While it was quick to grab allies, even by splitting parties, the only ally who won big was Naidu in Andhra along with Jana Sena. It is worth noting that, till the last moment, BJP was hesitant to join this alliance. As for the parties it broke – Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra – this has dented BJP's own credibility. Clearly, electorate is not amused by *toad poll* politics.

The defining trend in this general election, both at Parliament and assembly levels, seems to be anti-incumbency. BJP correctly anticipated that it would need allies this time, but it was too cocksure and took many voter blocs, including the beneficiaries of its welfare schemes, for granted. Incumbents in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh too assumed that they were unbeatable, and here it was BJP and its allies who benefited.

The humbling of BJP in its core areas of strength means that in his third term, Modi will have to adjust to the reality of coalition politics. Both NDU and Nitish will need to be kept in good humour, and major legislative changes cannot be done without a wider consensus not only among allies, but also among opposition. We can forget about One Nation One Poll, Uniform Civil Code and big-ticket economic reforms. Opposition will now be less likely to play dead, both in Parliament and in states.

The lessons BJP needs to learn are many. First, it is wrong to assume that just because Modi is popular, he will always carry the day. India is too diverse and an average voter too independent to allow anyone to rest on his laurels. Every leader, every party

has to work hard, and even then victory is not assured. Second, BJP has to build more local leaders, and the decision to sideline someone like Vasundhara Raje in Rajasthan surely cost big. While UP results suggest that Yogi Adityanath also needs to introspect, many party insiders believe that Yogi may have been circumscribed by higher powers in Delhi who see his rise as a threat to their own standing post-Modi.

Third, events like the Ram Mandir *pran pratistha* can help the party in a limited way among core voters, but for the wider electorate, bread-and-butter issues matter more. We cannot at this point estimate whether the lack of freebies from BJP – unlike Congress, which has promised the moon to youth and women – cost it many votes. Free ration of 5kg rice clearly was not enough. Jobs may have mattered more this time. In contrast, in 2019, when BiP was uncertain about victory, it made concessions to taxpayers and farmers just before the elections. This time, the party assumed that Modi's guarantee alone would be enough. It wasn't.

Fourth, party has to introspect on whether it can afford to base electoral calculations only on a consolidation of Hindu vote. This time, Hindus seem to have fully backed any party capable of beating BJP, and the Hindu counter-consolidation was not strong.

For Congress, the lessons are positive. Its stubborn opposition to BJP has finally paid dividends, and both Rahul Gandhi and his allies, mainly in UP, have reasons to rejoice. Additionally, the old strategy of relying heavily on minority votes and dividing the majority community with sharply targeted welfare schemes has worked this time. But Congress does owe an apology for the kind of calamity it heaped on EC.

Overall, this election proves once more that most elections are won in the states, and not nationally.

Good Democratic Politics: Create Jobs

Hi on the list of consequences of BJP returning to being dependent on a coalition, rather than having a majority of its own, would be the pressures on the economic front.

Ever since the liberalisation of the 1990s, conventional wisdom has been that economic policy needs to focus entirely on growth. Economists associated with govt have often explicitly argued that inequality does not matter as long as there is sufficient growth to take the poor above the poverty line. The 2024 general election results provide the first concrete challenge to that view.

The idea that high growth would provide the resources to take care of the interests of those at the base of the pyramid did not begin with BJP govt. It gathered momentum with the decision of UPA I to launch the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme. BJP provided further impetus to this approach by using the revenue from unequal growth to provide free food and other welfare measures.

This approach did bring an increasing share of Indians above the poverty line defined by economists, but the poverty line in the minds of the poor began to change. As the country celebrated extremely high levels of consumption, it raised the aspirations of those at the bottom of the pyramid.

Rahul Gandhi, in his first successful political initiative, spotted the dissatisfaction with the measures that merely raised the poor above the poverty line. The guarantees of Congress went far beyond tackling absolute poverty. He not only promised higher cash transfers

but, in states like Karnataka, the idea of free bus travel for women dramatically altered their relationship with the world outside their homes.

The promises of INDIA have not been enough to remove PM Modi and his politics of majority dominance at home and Indian dominance of the world but the performance of the alliance suggests that the rising aspirations of the poor can no longer be easily brushed aside.

To begin with, the dependence on regional party allies could well result in regional inequality gaining more attention than it has had in decades. The growth-with-inequality strategy led to the creation of a few metropolises that were too expensive to house less skilled labour and their families.

This resulted in the workers being forced to migrate for short-term assignments in the city while keeping their families in their villages. Their efforts to earn in cities so that they could spend in villages took a toll on their health and family lives. This cost was accepted as the earnings from the city changed their status in the village. Once their status changed, though, they wanted jobs closer to their homes. Unemployment became an issue that affected their votes.

Addressing the unemployment challenge has been made more difficult by the political narrative that emerged from the growth-with-inequality strategy. The welfare measures it used to offset the political costs of the strategy created their own narrative. These measures were seen as an individual's right, which had to be protected by govt. The impression was thus easily created that the jobs that were being promised would be govt jobs.

The expectation of govt jobs may well encourage regional allies to

demand large payouts from the Centre. It does not help that BJP govt would be dependent on support from NDU and Nitish, both of whom represent states that have long-standing demands from the Centre. Andhra Pradesh had been promised a substantial grant when the original state was divided, and Bihar had been promised a special grant. These grants could generate govt jobs, but they would fall far short of the numbers needed to make a serious dent in unemployment.

Beyond the quick fixes of central grants, the challenge of employment generation would require a fresh look at investment strategies. The current emphasis on attracting global capital, or Indian capital with a global presence, may not be effective, as this capital tends to prefer economies dominated by larger metropolises. The two states that have gained political significance from the 2024 election results – Andhra Pradesh and Bihar do not have any of the country's major metropolises in them.

It may be time to consider alternative patterns of industrialisation that are not only more effective in generating employment but can also be located in urban centres that are more hospitable to less skilled workers. Such an approach may also require greater reliance on the accumulation of local capital, rather than depending on attracting capital from outside. If the results of 2024 do generate such an alternative economic strategy, the return of coalitions may not be such a bad outcome.

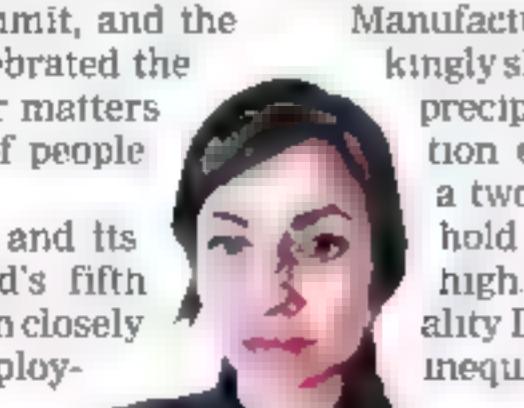
Back To Practical Hinduism

Just as pundits settled into the comfort of magical thinking – faith in Modi's charisma and grand national narratives – India's voters have given us a lesson in political realism. While the digital classes in Delhi and Bengaluru cheered the moon landing and the G20 summit, and the magnates in Gujarat celebrated the temple in Ayodhya, other matters have been on the minds of people in deep India.

India's swelling GDP and its new status as the world's fifth largest economy have been closely tracked by soaring unemployment, which has risen from 3.2% to 7.6% since 2013. This contrast reflects the gulf between the benefits of Modi's economics for the rich and the poor.

India's banks are no longer crippled by bankrupt billionaires, foreign investment has acquired confidence. While physical and digital infra, from airports to the digitisation of money, have expanded, life choices of the country's poorest and most vulnerable have shrunk. Crores of India's farmers and migrant workers have been left behind.

Lakhs of small and tiny, often grey market, businesses that run day-to-day India and form the country's economic backbone, are still recovering from demonetisation and GST policies. The small enterprise sector has shrunk to



19% of India's GDP, from 27.5% pre-Modi. While inflation soars, there has hardly been any growth in real wages since 2014 and the share of educated young people among the unemployed rose from 54.2% to 65.7% over the two Covid years.

Manufacturing growth is paustingly slow, agri profits have fallen precipitously, private consumption expenditure descended to a two-decade low, while household debt rose to an all-time high. According to World Inequality Database, India's economic inequality is worse than it has been in a century.

While pundits brooded over political messaging and national ideologies, predicting a Modi 4-eva govt, voters in the feds and on the streets were returning to their loyalties. Modi rode high on hope with two wildcards he received in the previous elections. This year, he was judged less on his promises than on what he has already done.

The verdict does not only damn Modinomics, it drastically cuts his image to size. Enсoноed in a bubble of media pundits, political technologists and sycophants, critics say the PM has become an auto-devotee, believing himself divinely ordained to lead single-handedly the new Bharat. Ignoring local leaders, failing to reward veteran party workers and sidelining

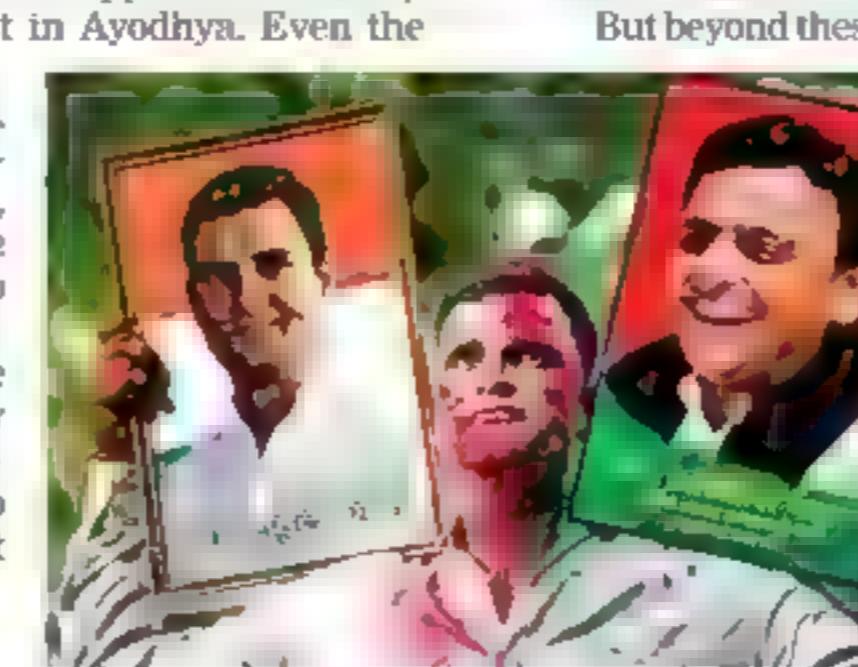
RSS have cost the party dozens of seats. Seats won in UP, Kerala, Odisha and Rajasthan went to known and trusted community leaders, not Modi's envoys.

Modi's polarising comments, arguably made when he realised this election will not be an easy ride, may have backfired, leaving many Hindus unimpressed. "India does not need to talk of Hindus and Muslims," says a *chaiwallah* in Jaipur. "We need roads and jobs."

In a survey conducted across Indian cities, 35% of BJP supporters said they had no interest in Ayodhya. Even the middle-class

Hindu women, who, as the keepers of faith, are more susceptible to Hindu nationalism, joined the party mostly through economic self-help groups, not theological associations.

Once again, India rejected totalising, abstract national ideologies, proving its politics to be as local, pragmatic and pluralistic as the Hinduism actually practised by most. Its political judgments have proven more agile and self possessed than any sitting room analyst's.



Lok Sabha results show caste retains its salience in north Indian politics – but in new, unpredictable ways. Before examining what's new, a look at what lingers from the past. One, dominant castes of north India continue to strongly prefer BJP, which remains a Brahmin-Bania party at the core. Second, peasant groups in UP and Bihar still prefer regional OBC-led parties. Third, Dalit voters continue to be split between the incumbent in New Delhi and small regional parties.

But beyond these, much has changed. BJP has shown over the past decade that it can create broad-based caste coalitions threading together the top, middle, and bottom of Hindu society. Rajputs and Jats and OBC-SC/ST voters endorsed Modi. This was more than social engineering. Long-standing blocs of *jatis* could be disaggregated, and recombined into successful electoral coalitions. Both winners and losers in electoral politics would receive the same spoils of state welfare as the

tabharthi (beneficiaries). As India experimented with universal welfare, more and more *jatis* could be enticed onto the merry-go-round.

But if BJP could do it, so could opposition. In UP particularly in its central and eastern flanks, SP abandoned its focus on Yadavs and Muslims, to award seats to Dalits according to its PDA *pichda* (backward), Dalit, *alpa sankhya* (minority) – strategy. Many *jatis*, Mayawati's supporters for over three decades, credibly believed a 'danger to the Constitution' obliged them to vote against BJP. As a result, SP drew a blank even in western UP.

Anti-BJP votes consolidated behind INDIA parties. Just as a broad neo-Hindutva coalition worked for BJP, a new socialism (*samajwadi*) rooted in the messy everyday realities of caste and class split success for the SP led INDIA coalition in UP.

In Bihar alliances of middle and lower castes have kept Lalu and Nitish in power since 1990. Yet the BJP-JDU coalition signalled a new trend: Brahmins, Bhumihars, and Rajputs could, after decades, band with Kurmis, Koeris, and Kushwahas. With Paswan's LJP joining NDA, a significant proportion of SC voters consolidated behind the neo-Hindu coalition.

In practice, this is a shifting social kaleidoscope more than a coalition

when the wily Nitish left NDA to join hands with RJD and Congress in the state. a caste census and a new welfare drive emerged. Every time he returned to NDA, predictably before national elections, he ensured BJP voters rallied behind JDU candidates and boosted his party's tally in Parliament.

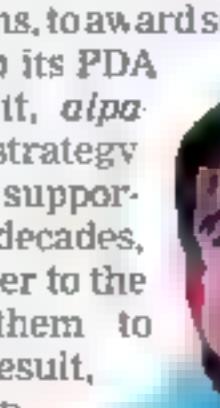
In Bihar RJD will learn from SP's successes in UP. With state elections next year, Tejashwi will look to woo Dalits and non-Yadav OBCs, who may have voted NDA this time. But for now, RJD and its allies have fared poorly. JDU has recorded its best LS performance since 2009, emerging as Bihar's single largest party.

But if Nitish now rejoins INDIA, he can end his political career with a top position in Delhi, leaving next year's assembly elections as a tantalising bipolar contest between BJP and RJD.

Universal welfare being the new normal in India, savvy voters are choosing carefully between coalitions of Hindutva and *samajwadi*, that offer new public goods. The underserved citizens of India's northern heartland stand to gain after decades of neglect. Each alliance will woo citizens with higher bids in exchange for votes. A world of possibility lies ahead as the north seeks to catch up with the south.

Heartland's Caste Consensus

ANASTASIA PILAVSKY



UDAY CHANDRA

Lok Sabha results show caste retains its salience in north Indian politics – but in new, unpredictable ways. Before examining what's new, a look at what lingers from the past. One, dominant castes of north India continue to strongly prefer BJP, which remains a Brahmin-Bania party at the core. Second, peasant groups in UP and Bihar still prefer regional OBC-led parties. Third, Dalit voters continue to be split between the incumbent in New Delhi and small regional parties.

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Why Modi Doesn't Really Need A Makeover

Over the years, there have been new layers of conventional wisdom that have shaped the punditry on Indian elections.

The first, which has been demonstrated at frequent intervals since the landmark 1977 elections, is that the term 'safe seat' is a misnomer in India. The second, also demonstrated over many decades, is that the accuracy of opinion polls is suspect. This election, exit polls have joined this list of non-certainties.

Premature triumphalism | It's one thing for a prematurely triumphant BJP leadership to proclaim its intention of breaching the 400-seat barrier in Lok Sabha – a feat that was only once possible in 1984, and that too under exceptional circumstances.

It's, however, a different matter to anticipate how the prospect of a steamroller majority after two terms is going to be viewed by the electorate.

Maybe the governing dispensation was misled by the series of opinion polls that suggested a presidential election with one candidate on the ballot. Maybe the expectations of markets were shaped by the optimism of exit polls that

suggested an all India wave for Modi.

Whatever the reality, it was a Black Tuesday for the investing classes, and a grim reality check for BJP activists who had set out in the morning in a celebratory mood.

Stability falls short | Over the past 10 years, since Modi assumed charge, India had got accustomed to not merely stability but dissension-free decision-making at Centre.

By depriving BJP of an outright parliamentary majority on its own and yet giving NDA a comfortable working majority, voters appear to have shunned the decisiveness and certitudes that had become a feature of Modi govt. They have, instead, opted for a greater measure of hesitation and tentativeness, but without embracing the dysfunctionality of INDIA.

Whether this was just a wake-up call to consider the interests of those unable to keep pace with the pace of Viks Bharat or a larger philosophical message celebrating a plodding approach will have to be assessed by Modi as he looks to begin his third term on a subdued note. How he and his brains-trust assess the election outcome will have a bearing on the immediate future.



SWAPAN DASGUPTA

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These distortions must, however, be kept in perspective. Overall, BJP's performance in its other stronghold areas of northern and western India was exemplary. Its ambition of making a mark in non-traditional areas didn't entirely succeed in Tamil Nadu, but who could have anticipated the scale of BJP success in Telangana, Odisha and its ability to finally dent the bipolar consensus of Kerala?

Yet, for BJP, the election was only a partial disaster. It failed to cross the 272 majority mark because of reverses in UP, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Maharashtra.

In the first three states, it was a failure of governance and an inability to address the concerns of dominant castes and Dalits.

In Maharashtra, the bid to ensure victory by decimating opposition triggered a moral repugnance that a crafty leader like Sharad Pawar was able to use to his advantage.

Corrective: Soft touch | The impression of high handedness and arrogance doesn't appear to have served BJP well in this election, and Modi will have to think about a corrective soft touch.

This will also have to involve BJP state units reverting to normal politics and becoming less dependent on investigative agencies.

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Build on Modi Guarantees | There was disappointment in Bengal, a state where Modi had put in an extra effort. However, the defeat hasn't been at a level to warrant abandoning the project altogether.

Organisational overhaul, a clear line of leadership, and a more culturally nuanced approach could prove to be rewarding for 2026 assembly elections.

The point is that while the Modi Guarantees may have been overwhelmed by the fragmentation of politics in some states, the narrative still holds good in most of the country. Modi remains by far the most popular and acceptable leader, and it's unlikely that BJP will even consider replacing him with someone who appears more consensual.

Even though some of the more radical facets of his agenda will probably have to be put on the backburner, Modi will be misreading the verdict if he chooses to reinvent himself dramatically.

He will be confronted by an energised Congress ecosystem that wants to go for BJP's jugular. Media too will become less friendly, if not hostile.

This isn't an unfamiliar situation. He faced similar challenges as Gujarat CM. How he converts threats into opportunities will channel the nation's attention in the coming months.

Elections That Reminded Netas, People Are The Boss

The historic mandate that the exit polls had predicted for BJP on Saturday didn't come through. And, given that BJP has fallen short of a simple majority, all bets about the new govt's agenda are now off. Because when BJP does form govt, it would be in a coalition where its power is much diminished. Which would mean a diminishing of both party's ability to run political manoeuvres and govt's ability to make unilateral decisions.



RAHUL VERMA

Where BJP has scored While BJP has taken a massive loss in seats across core states, it has by and large held on to its vote share, and continues its domination of some states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Plus, it has managed to expand its footprint in 'new' states such as Odisha, while also increasing its vote share in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It has performed well with allies in Bihar, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Why the setbacks | There is no single theory that can explain all of BJP's setbacks, as different states have gone in different directions.

• In Maharashtra and UP its alliance math went wrong, while INDIA stole the march.

• In Haryana, there was anti-incumbency; in Rajasthan, internal dissension took a toll. Along with Punjab, these were also farmer-protest affected areas.

• Overall, the party's electoral dominance has taken a hit. Its forward march in Bengal has been stalled for a few more years.

Whither the Modifactor? | BJP's brawny dominance has hitherto been over-dependent on PM's popularity. But this time, his leadership hasn't been able to mobilise the votes quite as robustly. This is not to argue that the PM's appeal doesn't matter for the party's performance, but rather that it has to square off with voters' perception of governance, political freedoms, and economic anxiety.

Is BJP's social coalition weakening? | Certainly, the cracks are beginning to show. In UP, for instance, losses seem to have mounted more in SC-dominated

seats than in Muslim dominated seats, as BSP has been wiped out. Economic anxiety has obviously also taken a toll on its support. Joblessness, in particular, has been a factor costing the youth vote. It is worth underlining now that rations and such kind of welfare can only keep a person or a voter happy for so long – though some of these factors did not mar the party's prospect in many states, including neighbouring Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Has overconfidence hurt the party? | Many voters did come to associate slogans like 'Ab ki baar 400 paar' with overconfidence and maybe arrogance. This may also have impacted turnout.

While the aggregate turnout may have remained the same, the composition of those who stayed away from the polling booth could have affected the results significantly. It could be that committed BJP voters became overconfident and stayed at home on voting day. For the fence-sitter who sways its way, it could be apathy that kept them home. And the impact of it all would have mounted if Congress-leaning voters sensed this was an existential moment for them, and therefore mobilised powerfully.

Of course, this time around, BJP will be much more dependent on its allies. An expansionist BJP with ever rising ambitions had made various allies quite unhappy. But now, it is very possible that some of the same allies will start demanding, and getting, their pound of flesh. This may also have significant implications for governance. For example, the party's big-ticket agenda items like One Nation One Election and Uniform Civil Code may have to be put on the backburner.

Finally, the 2024 LS results show that India very much remains a competitive electoral democracy, where voters continue to signal an evaluation of govt performance. Elections in this country have always worked as a corrective mechanism. And this time they have underlined that no majority is permanent.

Is BJP itself tiring? | This is an organisation with a famously well-oiled election machine. But there are signs that the grease is wearing thin in some parts. A sense of having achieved ideological hegemony could also be hurting its cadre's drive. This is also indicated by the loss of the Faizabad parliamentary constituency, which includes the Ayodhya assembly segment. Is it that Hindutva may now be paying retreating dividends?

Many turncoats were nominated, higher re-nominations increasing local anti-incumbency chances, and overall ticket distribution likely went awry, particularly



Why Congress Is Back But Isn't Quite There Yet

The big story of this election, arguably, has been the budding revival of Congress as a national force. We can take three preliminary indicators.

The first is the near doubling of its seat share, almost reaching the three-figure mark. If we chart Congress's seat share over the last four decades, from 1984 onwards, we see a story of a secular decline. Only on two previous occasions has Congress's seat share increased by over 40 seats (1991 and 2009).

The second is the jump in vote share by about 3 percentage points even though the party contested 93 fewer seats this time. At 328, it was also the only time it contested on fewer than 400 constituencies. Extrapolating vote share on seats contested, Congress's vote share would rival its previous highwater mark of 2009, when it garnered 29% votes.

Third, Congress has regained a footing in party strongholds where it had been wiped out over the last decade. These include Maharashtra's Vidarbha belt, UP's Awadh region, north-central Karnataka, Telangana, and parts of north-eastern Rajasthan.

Six battleground states powered its resurgence. Congress won 49 seats here, where it had won just six in 2019 – Maharashtra (13), Karnataka (9), Haryana (5), UP (6), Rajasthan (8) and Telangana (8).

So, what worked for Congress?

Collaboration | Alliance-centric strategy, where the party, much like in 2004, projected itself as the nucleus of a larger opposition. In UP, for example, it was happy to play second fiddle to SP, helping it shore up its backward caste base for the alliance.

In Rajasthan, similarly, it gave space to smaller Jat and tribal centric parties, RLJ and RAP, both of which won their seats and pushed up Congress's fortunes in neighbouring constituencies.

Message | The party's narrative articulated a vision that exploited BJP govt's vulnerability. An agenda of social justice, of protecting the Constitution and advancing the caste census, appears to have worked, especially among Dalits, who've returned to the party.

Rahul had sounded the poll bugle in his Nagpur rally, on Congress's foundation day on Dec 28 last year, where he set the campaign narrative of fighting BJP's ideology of 'raja-maharaja' with the ideology of Constitution-based social justice – framing the party as representing 90% of India. Kharge's leadership also helped the party insofar as it could project a national Dalit face. In UP, Congress played no small role in building a bridge for Dalits to cross over to Akhilesh's SP.

Rural support | Congress's creditable performance in semi-rural and rural districts can also be credited to its central focus on farmer distress and wealth concentration. This helped the party gather significant support among agrarian castes such as Jats. Congress has swept the Jat belt in Haryana for the first time since 2009. And perhaps also for the first time since the 1990s, Congress has managed to stitch a winning umbrella alliance in parts of Rajasthan – a Jat-Meena-Gujar-Dalit alliance.

Where did Congress fail again?

Hindi heartland | It is still weak in large swathes of the Hindi heartland and eastern India, where it used to be the largest party a generation or so back. It got wiped out, or nearly wiped out, once again in MP, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Odisha and Bengal. The party won only four seats here. It had won six in 2019.

Tribal hurdle | Despite Rahul's second Bharat Jodo Nyay yatra, which aimed to boost Congress's base among tribal voters, it fared poorly in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Assam, all en route the yatra. Indifference of tribal voters to the party's nyay (social justice) platform should be a serious source of concern for the party.

What does the future hold for the party?

Opportunity | There's much potential for Congress to build on the momentum from this election. Congress alliance would arguably start as favourite for the three state assembly elections in a few months in Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand. Maharashtra offers the party opportunity to regain its traditional strong hold, and perhaps somewhat replenish its empty coffers. Haryana would provide it the best opportunity since 2018 to defeat BJP in a straight contest in the Hindu belt. Jharkhand could help the party win back its tribal support.

Implosion of parties such as YSRCP in Andhra and BJD in Odisha opens a critical window of opportunity for Congress to regain space in these states by staking claim as the second pole of state politics.

Threats | Absence of structural reforms in the fossilised party bureaucracy, aging leadership in states, and weak central authority are serious threats. The Udaipur roadmap of democratising the party and opening it up to fresher cohorts of younger leaders has been honoured more in its breach.

Congress is still unable to attract backward castes and tribal voters in north-central and eastern India, without which it would struggle to regain its halcyon days.

The present verdict can only be termed a budding revival. The Grand Old Party has only caught a spark, but it would need to conscientiously follow a clear roadmap towards revival to ensure lasting gains.

Videos Told The Story: It's Not One Nation, One Pole

Six months ago, this election was a done deal. Then something changed. It didn't happen overnight, but gradually disenchantment against govt began to surface in pockets. The most striking change that we saw this time around was the organic appearance of an independent ecosystem of voices.

Dhruv Rathee perhaps single-handedly acted as the spearhead of the opposition's communication efforts, without being formally aligned with any party. That he managed to garner between 35-40m views for some of his videos is a sign of the tremendous impact he had on voters.

In a peculiar reversal of sorts, the decreasing credibility of all institutions, in particular media, has led to a search for non-institutional voices. There was a time when we looked for institutional certification in order to believe in something, now it seems to be the opposite. Any intermediary institution, no matter how powerful, is viewed with suspicion given the feeling that they all have been penetrated by the current power structure.

This election result has surprises for everyone. The biggest victors of this election are the regional parties. Between them, TDP, DMK,

TMC, SP and JDU have performed outstandingly well. UP held the biggest surprise of the elections, with SP winning more seats than BJP. BJP performed below expectations in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Bengal too and failed to make headway in Tamil Nadu.

For Congress, the results, though not definitive, are lifeline, an affirmation that the party still has something to offer voters. Rahul Gandhi has redeemed himself to a large extent, by campaigning tirelessly and holding the coalition together.

BJP too has some reason to cheer. It has performed outstandingly well in Odisha. In terms of vote share, it has also made a dent in the south.

But overall, this is a significant defeat for the party. Under Modi it is not designed to work in a coalition, and its ideological project is unlikely to get carried out in the changed circumstances. And Nitish and Chandrababu are hardly reliable allies.

The election has a few fundamental lessons that are worth heeding. At its most fundamental level, the verdict has spoken against the idea of a monolithic consolidation of power. The idea of one nation, one party, one religion, and one leader has been

shunned. In a sense, it is not as much a vote against Hindutva as it is against any attempt to homogenise the country into any single way of thinking.

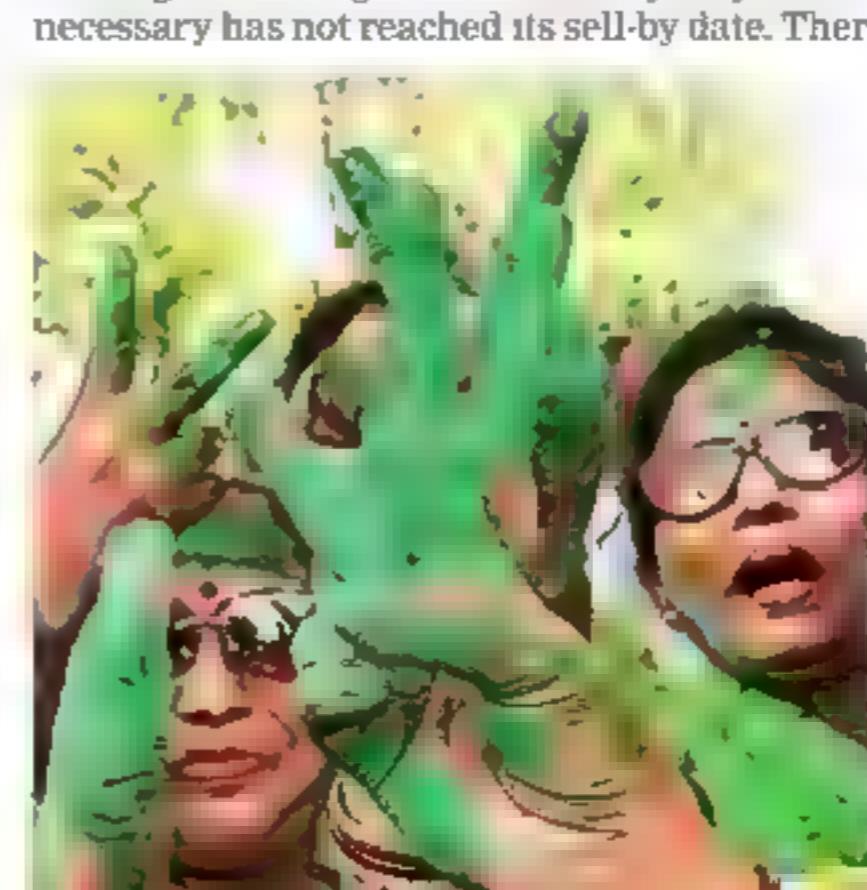
For Modi, the message is that there is only so much sway that a single individual can have in a diverse country, no matter how charismatic he might be and no matter to what extent a narrative is built around him. There is also the question of whether relying on a single vote-catching device creates a sense of sameness due to overexposure. The other significant shift that does not seem to have worked is the move away from a forward-looking message and an increasingly angry and negative attack on opposition and minorities.

The problem with silencing other voices is that one effectively removes any chance of getting feedback. Also, the noise generated by a party's support base is so strong and so uniformly aggressive that it compels a reaction. In 2019 this noise could drown out any other competition, this time around things have changed.

For media, there is a salutary lesson to be learned, should it be so inclined. Looking back at exit polls it becomes difficult to believe that all of them suffered from poor methodology and that there was no other agenda involved. The fact that many people are turning to independent voices

instead of relying on mainstream media should give them cause to reflect.

BJP has to ask itself if its current strategy of seeking to form govt in states by any means necessary has not reached its sell-by date. There



is only so much power to go around and more the influx of opportunists into a party by offering them inducement, the less that is left over for faithfuls.

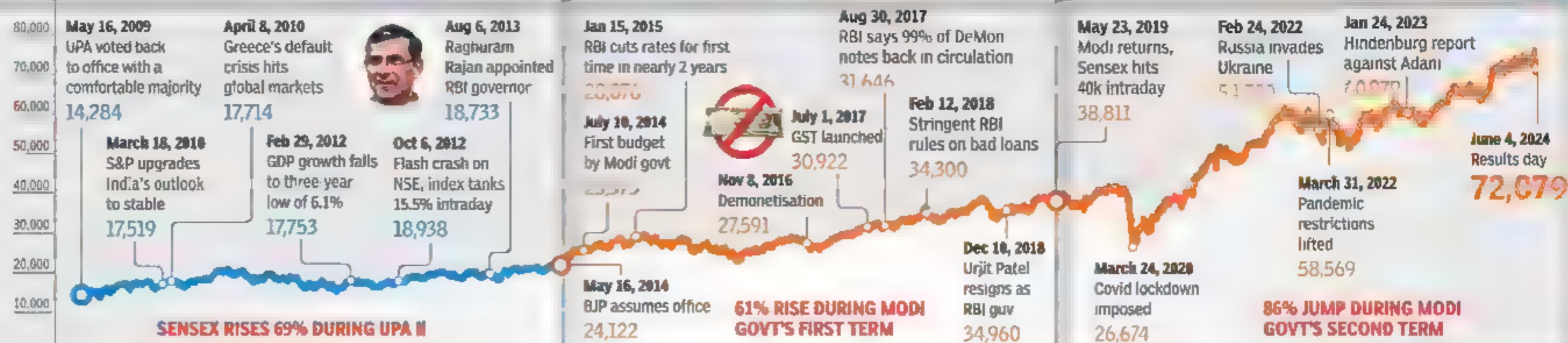
It may feel counterintuitive, but in many ways this is the best possible outcome for opposition. Winning a marginal victory would mean an unstable govt and while this alliance has meshed together for a campaign, they are unlikely to function coherently as a govt. This result gives them credibility and room to build something more substantial.

For now, something fundamental has changed even as BJP comes back to govt. Its current model of seeking and exercising absolute control via Modi's hold over the electorate is unlikely to work in the same way. BJP was seeking even greater concentration of power; what it has got is the exact opposite.

What we can hope for is some respite from the relentless barrage of negativity and small-mindedness that has characterised not just the campaign but larger national discourse in the last few years. Absolute power is no one's birthright, and India's electorate has left us in no doubt about that. BJP may have come back to govt but its style of governing the country has received a wake-up call. The voter has drawn the line.

More Wealth For More Indians

Sensex is up more than 5 times since mid-2009 and 3 times since May 2014, indicating that stock markets have created large and sustained wealth in the past decade-and-a-half. Average gains were highest in the last five years, and middle-class participation in the market also increased the most since 2019.



Money Managers See Policy Continuity With Economic Reforms, Capex & Infra Spending Despite NDA's Narrow Victory

Shock Exchange: Bulls Have Bears To Cross On D-St

Inflated stock valuations get reality check

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: Indian fund managers want the current pace of economic reforms and pro-industry policies to continue under the incoming govt.

Most believe that even though the BJP-led alliance now has a depleted mandate, it would continue the works and projects launched under the outgoing govt. This is despite the nervousness that gripped investors after the Lok Sabha poll results came out on Tuesday.

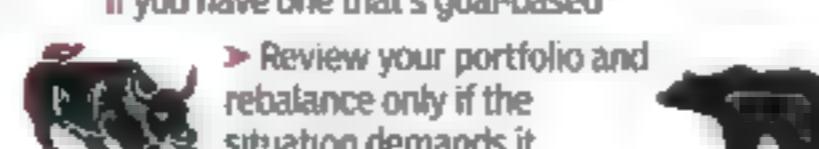
Money managers also believe that the poll mandate that is being perceived as disappointing for the ruling alliance but a great morale booster for the opposition could rein in the raging bull market in India and make valuations more rational. "The election result is likely to lead to a more balan-

Market Mood Swings Overnight

June 3	June 4
After Exit Polls	(% change)
SBI	-14
L&T	-13
Tata Steel	-9
Reliance	-8
HDFC Bank	-6

...What Should Investors Do

- > Avoid taking impulsive decisions amid elevated volatility in the market
- > There's a high chance govt policies will continue and the market will stabilise
- > Don't deviate or alter your investment plan if you have one that's goal-based
- > Review your portfolio and rebalance only if the situation demands it



ced market. Risk-reward in large-caps and underperforming sectors like banking and consumer appear more favourable," Rahul Singh, CIO (equities) at Tata MF, said. "There is likely to be greater scrutiny and valuation discipline in the performing sectors like capital goods, power, defence and manufacturing."

"There is a bit of uncertainty as investors are concerned about the slowdown of re-

forms that had been initiated under the (outgoing) BJP-led govt," said Vinit Sambrani, head (equities), DSP Mutual Fund. "This has triggered a correction in the markets as investors reassess the outlook under the new political landscape. We would like to believe that the development agenda that spurred the performance of equity is likely to persist irrespective of the party in power."

Fund managers believe that capital expenditure, both by govt and the private sector, are integral to the growth of the economy. Moreover, private capex — that has been lagging majorly for the last few years — should start and either supplement or complement the capex by govt.

"We would like to see the incoming govt continue to create a favourable environment for four growth factors: increased foreign di-

rect investments into the country, private capex, continuation of govt capex and better infrastructure, both social and physical," said Anand Shah, CIO for PMS & AIF Investments, ICICI Prudential AMC.

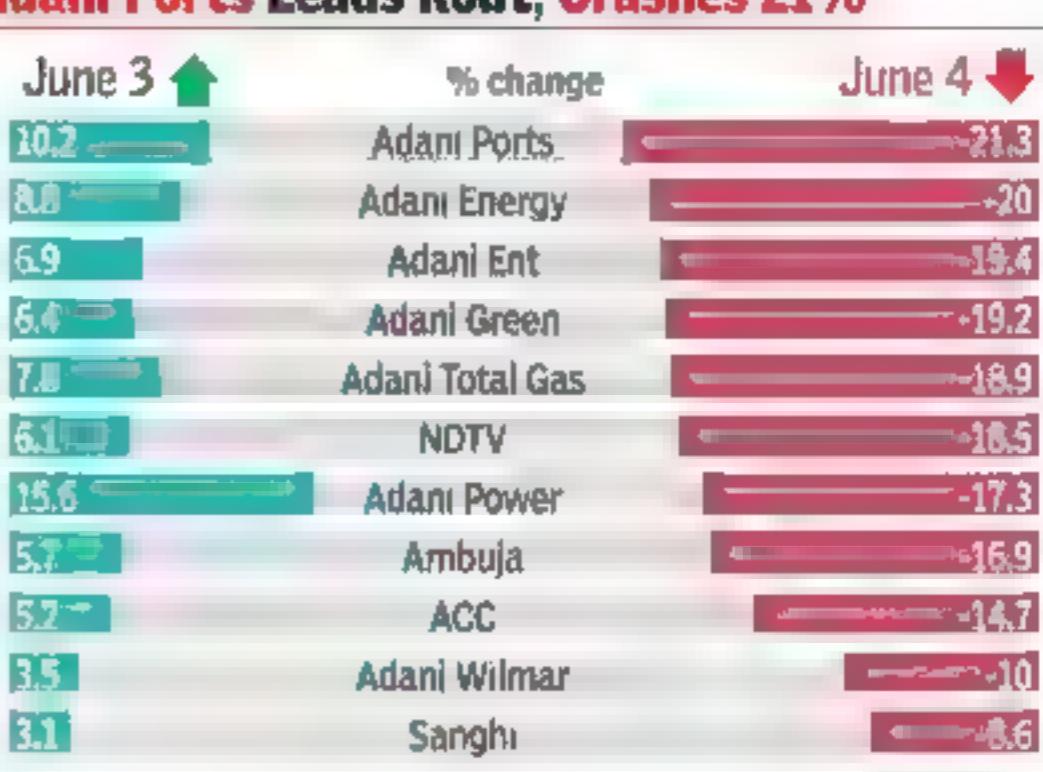
Fund managers believe that with India in a sweet spot in terms of macroeconomic fundamentals, any improvement at the global level — like improving macro fundamentals for the Chinese economy and rate cuts in the US — could act as tailwinds for the domestic economy.

The Budget for FY25 would be one of the deciding factors for the economy and the markets. Any moderation in the capital spending outlook (in the Budget) in favour of consumption support can further drive sectoral preferences going forward," Singh of Tata MF said.

During the day, as stock prices of Adani Group companies crashed, the group's combined market capitalisation fell from Rs 19.4 lakh crore on Monday to Rs 15.8 lakh crore, BSE data showed.

Group flagship Adani Enterprises led the slump. As the stock crashed 19%, its market cap eroded by Rs 80,416 crore. Adani Ports — the group company that will soon be a part of the sensex — lost a fifth of its market value or nearly Rs 72,800 crore to its current level of Rs 2.7 lakh crore. Among other group companies, Adani Green Energy lost nearly Rs 62,000 crore worth of market value while Adani Power lost about Rs 58,300 crore.

Adani Ports Leads Rout, Crashes 21%



How New Govt Will Face Key Policy Issues

Geopolitical uncertainties and the global economic situation may require acceleration of reforms. But with a coalition govt at the Centre, it may not be easy as some issues, such as privatisation and a relook at GST, need consensus. TOI lists top areas of focus:

GST REVAMP: Five-slab GST rate structure may not be reviewed immediately as it may require merging the 12% and 18% slabs, necessitating an increase in levies on goods and services that move into the higher bracket. That's an issue on which pol consensus may not be easy.

PUBLIC FINANCES: Privatisation is likely to be put on a backburner for some time. While RBI's mega dividend of Rs 2.1L cr and robust GST revenues will keep Centre's finances in good shape, the Centre may have to go slow on cleaning up the subsidy regime further, although greater use of technology to plug leakages is something that won't change.

INVESTMENT PUSH: After hitting a high of \$85 billion in 2021-22, the annual inflow of foreign direct investments has fallen for two consecutive years, touching \$71 billion in 2023-24. Govt is expected to make the investment regime more attractive in several sectors, including electric vehicles and artificial intelligence.

FOOD PRICES: Although overall inflation has moderated (see chart below), food prices remain both volatile and high. Govt may take steps to weatherproof prices and shield it from climate-induced shocks such as heatwaves and floods.

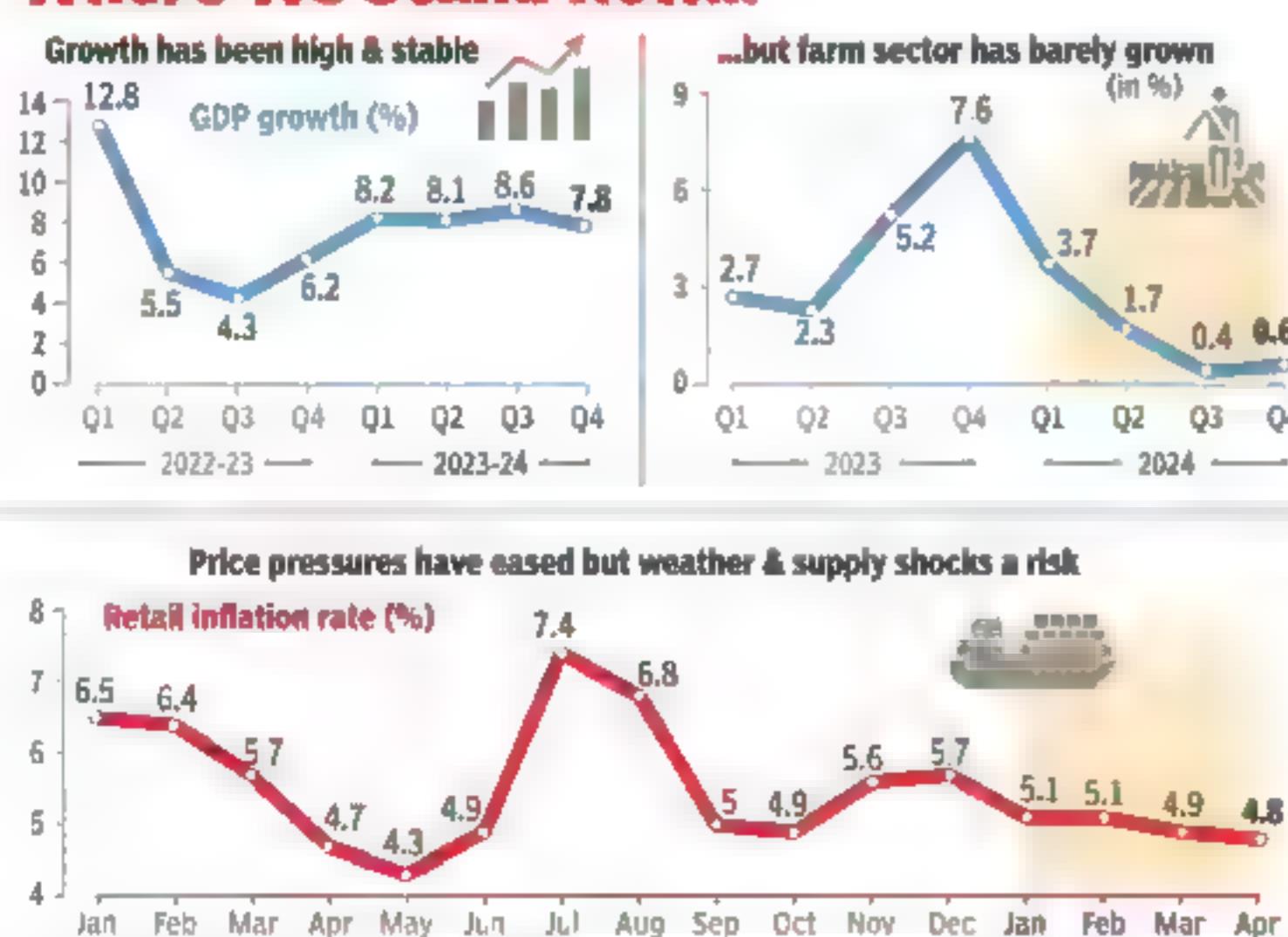
AGRICULTURE: The latest GDP data indicates a relative stagnation in the farm sector. Reforms focusing on irrigation and use of AI to raise productivity are expected. Election results point to the challenging but imminent need to raise farmers' income.

EXPORTS & PLI: The production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme has helped push exports of smartphones and other products but there have been demands to extend it to more sectors, such as toys and footwear. Expect fine-tuning of PLI to focus more sharply on companies and sectors willing to shift out of China for export production.

REGULATORY CLARITY: Before the poll dates were announced, several new economic legislations were in the works. A better regulation of cryptocurrencies, AI, data protection is under consideration.

MAINTAINING GROWTH: Most economists do not expect 2024-25 GDP growth to be a repeat of 8.2% growth in 2023-24. But ensuring a growth rate of even 7% in the current global economic environment won't be easy. Among the steps expected are a road map for energy transition and a push for infra investments. Economic ministries have made action plans with specific targets for 2030 and 2047. A ministry-wise action plan could be unveiled, if there is a consensus in the new govt.

Where We Stand Now...



While urban unemployment rate is steady, youth joblessness is high

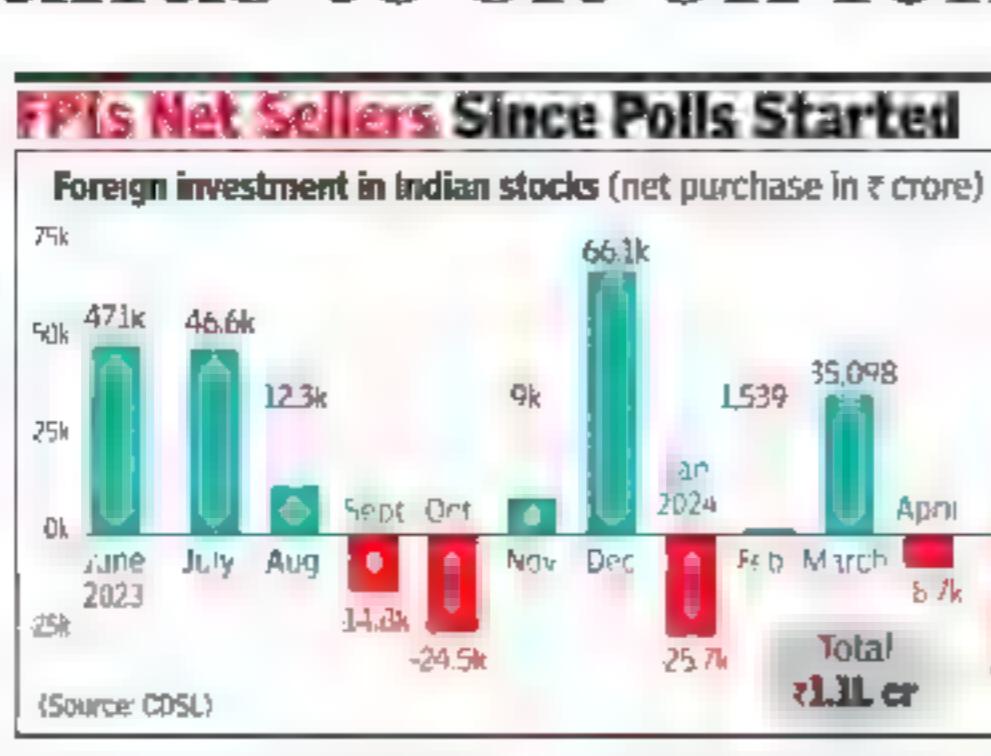


Foreign funds to sit on fence for now

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: Foreign fund managers, who have been cautious on Indian stocks since the Lok Sabha polls started in April, are expected to maintain the status quo. Neither go on investing with fresh zeal nor take money out in droves. Foreign portfolio investors feel that the lower-than-expectected Lok Sabha seats for the BJP could limit their decision-making bandwidth in the coming days.

Since April this year, FPIs have been net sellers of stocks in India and have not taken out nearly Rs 37,700 crore, including Tuesday's net selling figure of Rs 12,436 crore, data from the BSE and CDSL showed. Any major change in investment patterns of foreign



union budget announcements, implementation of labour laws and the next set of reforms in land and capital.

"This was not an election outcome the market valuations were set up for Indian valuations have been expensive for pretty ordinary corporate earnings growth/outlook. One of the arguments behind India's rich valuations has been the political stability/policy certainty afforded by a strong govt. Some of those assumptions could now come under question," the report by UBS said.

A report by Societe Generale, another foreign broker, noted that the less-than-majority number for BJP on its own, unlike in 2019, could prompt the incoming govt to focus on subsidies at the expense of capex.

funds in India could have a strong impact on the stock market, dealers said. "After a weak political outcome, we believe investors will focus on govt formation and the choice of prime ministerial candidate considering the BJP does not have a simple majority of its own," a report by foreign broking major UBS said. The other focus areas would be "policy choices to support growth vis-a-vis ensuring macro stability, and the reform narrative".

UBS analysts said they would watch out for upcoming

In Modi's 2nd Term, TaMo Was Best Bet, IndusInd Worst

₹1 lakh invested in sensex stocks on May 23, 2019, when Modi was re-elected as PM, would today have been worth... ₹1.11 Lakh.

Tata Motors Mahindra Airtel Sun Pharma Tata Steel ITC HUL HDFC Bk Kotak Bk IndusInd Bk

Total ₹1.11 Lakh

(Source: CDSL)

Tata Motors was top sensex loser in Modi's 1st term, while financials were top gainers

Mumbai: India, which has emerged as the second-largest IPO market on the world league table, has raised \$4 billion so far this year. With NDA returning to form the next govt, hopes of policy continuity should extend the IPO boom throughout the rest of 2024.

The \$4 billion raised by India is about 45% less than what it collected in all of 2023. LSEG data shows, but outperforms China (\$3 billion) and Saudi Arabia (\$2.1 billion). The number is also higher than the combined amount raised in Turkey, Hong Kong and South Korea. The US is the largest IPO mar-

Ahead Of China...



ket having raised \$1.4 billion so far in 2024, according to LSEG. From number 11 in 2019, India secured the third place globally in terms of IPO proceeds after the US and China in 2023.

India has hosted 113 IPOs between Jan this year and

now. "Amidst general elections, the primary market remained vibrant with the solid response to certain IPOs like Awfis Space Solutions. Confidence can be gauged by these offerings that have been launched amidst elections... Looking ahead, the market is set to witness a flurry of IPOs from new-age business as well as from conventional business segments," said Mahavir Lunawat, MD at investment bank Pantomath Capital Advisors.

Several companies such as Hyundai Motor India, Tata Capital, Ola Electric Mobility, and NSDL are looking at launching their IPOs.

IPO wave in India has no reason to stop, say analysts

TEAM TOI

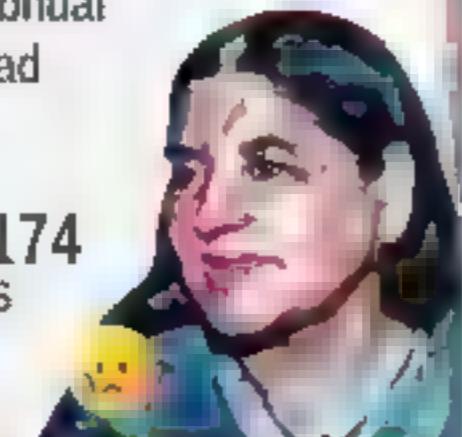
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SULTANPUR, UP

Maneka Gandhi
BJP
LOST TO
Rambhu Nishad
SP
BY 43,174 VOTES



NAGINA, UP

Chandrashekhar Azad
AAZAD SAMAJI PARTY
WON AGAINST
Om Kumar
BJP
BY 1,51,473 VOTES



PURI, ODISHA

Sambit Patra
BJP
WON AGAINST
Arup Mohan Patnaik
BJD
BY 1,04,709 VOTES



TAMILUK, WB

Abhijit Gangopadhyay
TMC
WON AGAINST
Debangshu Bhattacharya
TMC
BY 77,733 VOTES



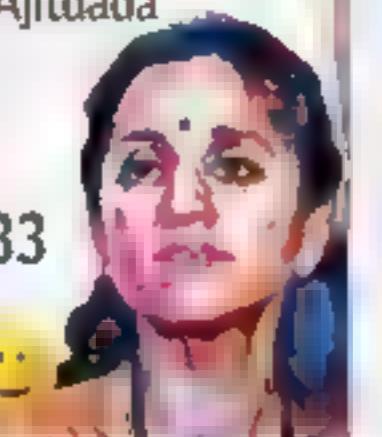
KOTA, RAJASTHAN

Om Birla
BJP
WON AGAINST
Prahlad Gunjal
Cong
BY 41,974 VOTES



BARAMATI, MH

Supriya Sule
NCP (SP)
WON AGAINST
Sunetra Ajitdada Pawar
NCP
BY 1,58,333 VOTES



HASSAN, KARNATAKA

Prajwal Revanna
JD(S)
LOST TO
Shreyas M Patel
Cong
BY 42,649 VOTES



Modi margin dips from 4.8L to 1.5L, vote share from 63.6% to 54.2%

Closest Fight Since 2014 Win Despite 70K Rise In Total Votes Polled

Rajeev Dikshit
@timesgroup.com



Mod bagged 6,12,970 votes to defeat Rai, who secured 4,60,457. In 2014, Modi's vitory margin was 3.7 lakh.

Varanasi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi won Varanasi Lok Sabha seat by defeating INDIA bloc candidate and Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai, but his 1.5-lakh vote victory margin on Tuesday marked the closest contest the prime minister has faced since his victory in 2014, and a steep fall from 2019 when he had won by 4.8 lakh votes.

Rai, jubilant even in defeat, claimed he had scored a "moral victory". As the sole challenger, he had not only stopped Modi from making a new victory margin record but also set one himself losing to Modi with the smallest margin.

It is not just Modi's margin that has fallen. He got about 62,000 fewer votes this time (6.1 lakh compared to 6.8 lakh in 2019) despite the total votes in the constituency rising by about 70,000 (from 10.8 lakh to 11.3 lakh). His vote share dropped from

63.8% to 54.2%. Modi bagged 6,12,970 votes to defeat Rai, who secured 4,60,457. In 2014, Modi's victory margin was 3.7 lakh. Early in the day, TV news flashes had created a flutter when they showed Rai leading by 8,000 votes after the first three rounds of counting.

Rai's parliamentary constituency poll management team convenor, Surendra Narain Singh Audhe, said, "In 2014, anti-BJP votes were divided among four contenders, while it was divided be-

tween two contestants in 2019. Moreover, this time, an entire chunk of non-BJP votes went to the INDIA bloc candidate. This was the reason for the reduced victory margin."

But why did Modi's vote count fall despite the total number of votes polled on June 1 being greater than in 2019? BJP Kashi region unit president Dilip Singh Patel said, "We are scheduling an organisation meeting in which all reasons for the 2024 LS poll performance in Varanasi seat will be reviewed."

At Gulab Bagh, where victory celebrations took place late evening, it was evident that the jubilation lacked the vigour of the past two elections.

Rai was happy. "The people of Varanasi showered their blessings on me to show the mirror to those who in their arrogance of power raised slogans of notching up 10 lakh votes and had engaged money power and their best forces in Kashi to achieve the target of winning the election with the biggest margin. INDIA bloc unitedly shattered this dream," said Rai, who had finished third in 2014 and 2019.

Early results during counting of votes at Pahadiya Mandi shocked BJP as in the initial three rounds Rai was leading. But once Modi took the lead, he maintained it till the last round. However, the lead increased slowly, unlike the galloping seen in 2014 and 2019 when Modi was in the lead right from the first round.

The remaining five seats where more women voted than men were Domariyaganj, Bansgaon, Maharganj, Krishnagar and Deoria. BJP was winning or leading in them

INDIA bloc wins 12 of 17 UP seats with higher women turnout



Lucknow: INDIA bloc won 12 of the 17 UP seats — a strike rate of 70% — where women voter turnout was more than men in absolute numbers, reports Arvind Chauhan

Congress's Rahul Gandhi and Kishori Lal Sharma won with more than 3.9 lakh and 1.6 lakh votes in Rae Bareli and Amethi, where 5,23,822 and 4,92,861 women voted, respectively. The other 16 seats were won by SP in Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Ambedkar Nagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Salempur, Lalganj and Machilishahr.

The remaining five seats where more women voted than men were Domariyaganj, Bansgaon, Maharganj, Krishnagar and Deoria. BJP was winning or leading in them

It's not the 1st time exit polls have gone awry. Here's why it happens

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Psephologist Pradeep Gupta wept on live television on Tuesday. The reputed pollster was way off target in his prediction of Lok Sabha 2024 election results. Axis India Today had given 361-401 seats to NDA

He wasn't the only one psephologist who got the outcome wrong. Today's Chanakya News24, ETG Times Now, Maritz Republic Bharat, ABP-Croter all were spectacularly inaccurate. And many were left wondering what could have led to the mismatch between exit polls and actual results.

D Shyam Babu of Centre for Policy Research says that when you have electoral waves, such as the anti-incumbency wave in 2014, prediction gets closer to reality. "Exit polls don't deliver when the contest is close and we need them as in this election," he says.

It is not the first time that exit polls proved to be erroneous. In 2004, exit polls had predicted a majority for the incumbent NDA government led by PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. But the coalition ended up getting fewer seats than Congress-led UPA. Such surveys also went haywire in several assembly polls in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other states.

Shyam Babu speculates that it could be that many who voted for non-BJP parties might have misreported their choice. "This could be partly due to apprehension or a factor of groupthink, not backing an obvious and ascendant BJP might appear silly or bigoted," he says.

Rahul Verma of CPR offered a state-wise break-up of the exit polls. "Kerala, TN, Gujarat, MP, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand are expected to give Karnatak, Bihar, Odisha, AP, Telangana, Delhi in the direction pollsters predicted. UP, Maharashtra, West Bengal three largest states with 160 seats — horribly wrong," he posted on X.

Soil scientist Badri Narayan agrees the exit polls were bang on in several states but also woefully inaccurate in three big states. He attributed this to a possibly flawed methodology. "It seems the pollsters listened to the visible public and did not speak to the quiet voter," he said. In exit polls, voters are asked about their political choice after they have cast their ballot.

Sociologist Dipankar Gupta says that there is no way an enumerator can tick boxes which capture gestures, rolling eyes, shrug and glances. "He or she is biased in favour of perceptions fed by media, which leads this person to consider ambiguous responses as one in line with pre-existing biases. The enumerator is nearly always from a different social and social background," he says.

"Also, in an environment which is hierarchical and lacks trust there is a tendency to conceal one's honest opinion, especially if the respondent perceives that he or her view is out of the ordinary and what is generally acceptable at this point of time," he says.

Political scientist Balveer Aurora says the exit polls displayed a herd mentality. "None of them wanted to risk underplaying BJP. They lost credibility in the process," he says.

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Date : 04.06.2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers/ loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the Procurement of Drugs for Anemia Mukth Bharath for the year 2023-24

SI. No	Tender No. and Date	No. of Items
1.	KMSCL/ED/IFA/RC/2024/009 dtd 04 06.2024	05

The last date and time of online uploading of tender will be 20 06 2024, 5 00 pm. The date and time of opening of Technical bid will be 24 06 2024 11 00 am. Tender shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender inviting Authority)

Maharaja Agrasen Medical College Agroha (Hisar)-125047 (Haryana)

(Recognized by NMC/MCI/Govt. Aided)

Website: www.mamc.edu.in

Phone No. 8930200801

Email:- director@mamc.edu.in

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Applications are invited for filling up the posts of Faculty (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Senior Resident & C.M.O.) in various Departments in MAMC, Agroha. Qualifications as per NMC & salary as per Haryana Govt. with good perks with NPA, New Pension Scheme. Starting salary: C.M.O.-109980/-, Senior Resident-141860/-, Assistant Professor-145360/-, Associate Professor-245080/- & Professor-248860/- + HRA + CA as per rule. For more details, the interested candidates may visit at our website: <https://mamc.edu.in/jobs-2/>

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER JHARKHAND BHAWAN, GOVT. OF JHARKHAND NEW DELHI-110057

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF NIT 321526 DATED 06.03.2024 AND INVITATION OF FRESH TENDERS HOUSEKEEPING & CATERING SERVICES IN JHARKHAND BHAWAN, NEW DELHI

The tender invited through PR 321526 dated 06 03 2024, is hereby cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and fresh tenders are invited for the same.

Sealed tenders are invited from reputed parties having relevant experience for "Round the clock Housekeeping, Cleaning, Catering and maintenance of Reception Desk, General Pest Control & Rodent Control at Jharkhand Bhawan" guesthouse at Kusumprahar, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi 110057 from the date of agreement for a period of 2 years. The Jharkhand Bhawan includes 20 standard rooms, 2 Executive suites, 2 VIP suites and office of the Resident Commissioner, Jharkhand Bhawan, Kusumprahar, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi from 10 06 2024 on a/w, working days during office hours.

Cost of the form is Rs. 1000/- and to be paid in cash. MSMEs are exempted from payment of Tender document fee and EMD as per Government policy.

Filled up tender form, along with bank draft of Rs. 50,000/- drawn in favour of Chief Administrative Officer, Jharkhand Bhawan, Govt. of Jharkhand towards refundable Earnest Money should be submitted in two separate covers each containing technical bid and financial bid respectively in the office of Chief Administrative Officer, Jharkhand Bhawan, Kusumprahar, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi - 110057 (Tel. No. 26739000) latest by 5 PM on 25.06.2024. Tender is not transferable.

Each page of the tender form should be signed by the bidder. The technical bids shall be opened at 11 A.M. on 26.06.2024, at Jharkhand Bhawan, New Delhi in presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives with valid ID Card and authorization letter. Due to unforeseen circumstances if the tender is not opened on the stipulated date, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time i.e., 11 A.M. The financial bids will be opened after evaluation of technical bids by the tender committee.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
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Date: 20th - 22nd June
Venue: The Park Hotel, Delhi

THE TIMES OF INDIA

NBT
नवभारत टाइम्स

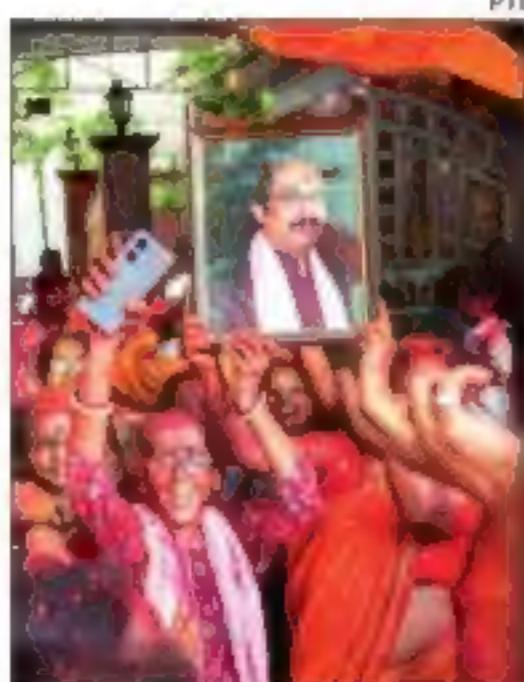
DelhiTimes

GurgaonTimes

RACE TO LOK SABHA	HYDERABAD, TS	MAINPURI, UP	RAJGARH, MP	COIMBATORE, TN	KRISHNANAGAR, WB	RAMANATHAPURAM, TN	T'VANANTHAPURAM, KER
Pass Or Fail?	Asaduddin Owaisi AIMIM WON AGAINST Madhavi Komppala BJP BY 3,38,087 VOTES	Dimple Yadav SP WON AGAINST Jayveer Singh BJP BY 2,21,639 VOTES	Digvijaya Singh CONG LOST TO Rodmal Nagar BJP BY 1,46,089 VOTES	K Annamalai BJP LOST TO Ganapathy Rajkumar P DMK BY 1,18,068 VOTES	Mahua Moitra TMC WON AGAINST Amrita Roy BJP BY 56,705 VOTES	O Panneerselvam INDEPENDENT LOST TO Navaskani K JUML BY 1,66,782 VOTES	Shashi Tharoor CONG WON AGAINST Rajeev Chandrasekhar BJP BY 16,077 VOTES

Shinde's man prevails in Sena vs Sena cliffhanger by meagre 48 votes

Richa Pinto &
Samritha Deb Roy / TNN



Mumbai: The Mumbai Northwest constituency was expected to be an intense Sena vs Sena battle—and counting day exceeded expectations.

In a nail-biting finish, Ravindra Waikar of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena narrowly defeated Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray) Amol Kirtikar by just 48 votes, the lowest margin in the state. Incidentally, the constituency also had the highest number of NOTAs in the city, which has six Lok Sabha seats.

Uddhav Thackeray said his party will challenge the result.

Waikar's win was declared around 8pm at the NESCO counting centre in Goregaon, where crowds of supporters of both candidates gathered outside the gates and raised slaps as the vote turned.

UBT's Kirtikar had been leading the EVM count for much of the afternoon, with a margin of 1700-odd votes at around 4pm. Confident of victory, he arrived at the counting centre where he was met by jubilant supporters. But the mood changed soon after as his lead shrank to one vote. And when the postal ballots were added, the lead swung in his rival Waikar's favour.

valid postal votes. But officials deemed that these votes stood as invalid.

Kirtikar received a total of 4,52,596 votes, while Waikar received 4,526,44 votes.

The atmosphere outside NESCO shifted when Sena UBT supporters, who had brought their dhol tasha and colours, learned about his narrow loss. They began to shout slogans of "cheater" even as Waikar's supporters celebrated. Police presence was strengthened but there was no violence, officials said.

Waikar said, "I am glad to have got an opportunity to serve the nation through this seat. I also feel bad about Amol's loss and apologize to him". Waikar thanked Eknath Shinde, Devendra Fadnavis and Raj Thackeray before leaving the counting venue. Amol Kirtikar didn't comment on the final results.

Congress wrests both Manipur seats, JNU prof among winners

TEAM TOI

Guwahati: Congress wrested Manipur from BJP and its ally, NPF, with both Meitei-dominated valley and tribal-majority hills voting in grand old party after a year of ethnic strife that has cost over 200 lives.

While JNU professor Anomchha Bimal Akojjam defeated state minister and BJP candidate Thounaojam Basanta Kumar in Inner Manipur, in the hills Alfred Kangang S Arthur beat NPF's Kachul Timothy Zilmik in Outer Manipur seat.

For voters across the valley and the hills, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's visit to the state during the height of the ethnic clashes provided them the attention they had sought from New Delhi. This was something that PM Narendra Modi failed to deliver and the people reciprocated accordingly.

Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee president Keisham Meghachandra Singh, expressed gratitude to the state's people for electing Congress candidates in both seats and dedicated the electoral success to people who have suffered in the strife and those driven from their homes by violence to relief camps.

AICC member and senior spokesperson for Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee Ningombam Bupenda Meitei wrote on 'X': "Leave 400, the people of Manipur have rejected the outgoing PM Modi by giving a margin of 1.5 lakh votes for INC candidate, Dr. @Bimal_Akojjam and a margin of more than 0.7 lakh votes for another Congress candidate, Alfred Arthur, in 2 seats from Manipur (sic)."

SP scores in all regions, takes pole position

From 5 Seats In '19, Tally Swells To 35 & 2 Leads

Arvind Chauhan
@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party's jump from five Lok Sabha seats in 2019 to pole position five years later marks a stun-

SP's ally Congress won five seats in the central region: Rae Bareli, Amethi, Allahabad, Sitapur and Barabanki



SP supporters celebrate in Lucknow on Tuesday. The party's stellar show marks a stunning comeback against all expectations

ning comeback against all expectations, with the bonus of an all-round performance spanning all four regions of this vast and diverse state. Late Tuesday, Akhilesh Yadav's party was sitting pretty

with 37 seats.

In Rohilkhand, SP and its ally Congress won five seats each, including Kairana by a margin of 69,116 votes, Muzaffarnagar by 24,672 votes and Firozabad by 89,312

votes. The rural seat of Mainpuri also went SP's way. At last count, Etah was almost in the kitty.

In Moradabad, SP's margin of victory was 1.05 lakh votes, while Muslim-dom-

inant Rampur gave the party a winning margin of 87,434 votes. In Sambhal, SP was victorious by 1.3 lakh votes.

Its INDIA bloc partner Congress won the Saharanpur seat by 64,542 votes.

Afzal Ansari, brother of don Mukhtar Ansari, won Ghazipur by 1.24 lakh votes.

In Chandauli, SP's Virendra Singh defeated Union minister Pratapgarh, Etawah and Kannauj.

In Kheri, SP's Utkarsh Verma Madhur defeated Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra Teni by 34,329 votes.

Sultanpur saw Rambhuwal Nishad trounce BJP's Maneka Gandhi by 43,174 votes.

Another SP candidate, R K Chaudhary, defeated Union minister Kaushal Kishore in the Mohanlalganj reserved seat.

Congress won five seats in the central region — Rae Bareli, Amethi, Allahabad, Barabanki and Sitapur.

In the south eastern part, SP won 13 seats, including Jaunpur, where BSP turncoat Babu Singh Kushwaha defeated BJP's Kripa Shankar Singh by 94,766 votes. Priya Saro won the reserved Machhlisahr seat for SP by 34,536 votes.

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In northeast UP, the party won Shravasti, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Azamgarh, Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia and the reserved Lalganj seat.

Bundelkhand, too, saw an SP surge. Narayan Das Ahirwar won Jalaun by 53,898 votes and Krishna Devi Shivshankar Patel triumphed in Banda by 71,210 votes.

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DELHI SKILL AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP UNIVERSITY
(A State University Established under Govt. of NCT of Delhi Act 04 of 2020)
HQ - DSEU Dwarka Campus, Sector 9, Dwarka, New Delhi-110077
Website: <https://dseu.ac.in>

ADMISSION ANNOUNCEMENT (UG PROGRAMS- 2024-25)

Interactive session with the Vice Chancellor,
DSEU will be held at 12:00 PM on 06.06.24
(Thursday) at DSEU HQ, Dwarka.

Registration & Counselling Fee
(Non-Refundable)- ₹1500/-

PROGRAMS OFFERED

UG-Certificate Programs (Full Time) (Duration-01 Year) NCf Level-4.5	UG-Diploma Programs (Full Time) (Duration-02 Years) NCf Level-5	UG-Degree Programs (Full Time) (Four Year UG Degree Programs with exit options) NCf Level-6 with exit option at NCf Level 5.5
1. Certificate Course in Food Production	1. UG Diploma in Sports Fitness and Yoga Applications	1. B.S. Automotive Retail Management
2. Certificate Course in Retail Services	2. UG Diploma in Hospitality Operations	2. B.S. Banking, Financial Services and Insurance
3. Certificate Course in Computer System Operator	3. UG Diploma in Beauty and Wellness	3. B.S. E-Commerce Operations and Digital Application
4. Certificate course in Digital Marketing and Web development	4. UG Diploma in Beauty and Wellness	4. B.S. Retail Management
5. Certificate course in Finance Executive	5. UG Diploma in Video Production	5. B.S. Supply Chain Management
6. Certificate course in refrigeration and Air conditioning Skills	6. UG Diploma in Precision Engineering	6. B.S. Hospitality Management
7. Certificate course in Welding Technology	7. UG Diploma in Garment Manufacturing and Quality Assurance	7. B.S. Community Organisation and Development Practice
8. Certificate course in Mechatronics skill	8. UG Diploma in Tool and Die Making	8. B.S. Digital marketing and Data Analytics
	9. UG Diploma in Food Production	9. B.S. Computer Applications
	10. UG Diploma in Light Vehicles	10. B.A. (Hons.) Spanish
	11. UG Diploma in Heavy Vehicles	11. B.S. Beauty Therapy
	12. UG Diploma in German Language	12. B.Sc. (Hons.) Mathematics
	13. UG Diploma in Japanese Language	13. B.S. Office Management
	14. UG Diploma in French Language	14. B.A. (Hons.) Fine Arts
	15. UG Diploma in Computer System Operator	15. B.S. Digital Media Design
	16. UG Diploma in Apparel Retail Management and Merchandising	16. B.S. Business Process Management
	17. Diploma in Pharmacy	17. B.S. Fashion Design
		18. B.S. Interior Design
		19. B.S. Hospital Facility Management
		20. B.S. Optometry
		21. B.S. Entrepreneurship
		22. B.S. Dialysis Technology
		23. B.S. Emergency Medical Technology
		24. B.S. Medical Laboratory Sciences
		25. B.S. Facility Management

Eligibility Criteria for Admission to UG Programs 2024-25

S. No	Programs	Minimum Eligibility
1.	UG Certificate	(i) XII (senior secondary) Grade Pass or (ii) 10th+2-Yr NTC/NAC/CITS, (iii) 40 credits of NSQF level 4.0.
2.	UG Diploma	
3.	UG Degree	

Important dates for Online Registration-

1.	Commencement of Online Registration and Choice Filling. (Along with Application Fee Payment)	May 24, 2024 (Friday) from 11:00 A.M.
2.	Last Date and Time for Online Registration	June 15, 2024 (Saturday) till 05:30 P.M.

How to apply - The candidates are required to fill the online application form available at <https://dseuadm.samarth.edu.in/ug>. Keeping visiting DSEU website regularly for further updates. You may visit the above mentioned website for further details about the programs, eligibility and relaxation in eligibility to reserve categories, fees and admission process. In case of any difficulty to apply online application, candidate may visit DSEU (HQ) Dwarka.

Registrar, DSEU



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Shah stamps his supremacy in Gandhinagar with 7.4L win

Betters His
5.6L Victory
Margin Of '19



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Gandhinagar: Having begun his journey in public life more than 30 years ago as a booth-level BJP worker in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency, Amit Shah stamped his supremacy on the prestigious constituency on Saturday, pulling off a spectacular win with a 7.4-lakh vote margin.

Shah defeated his Congress rival Sonal Patel, by 7,44,716 votes, the second-highest victory margin in Gujarat and likely among the top five in country, in 2024 general elections. Shah polled 10,10,972 votes against 2,66,256 votes polled by Patel. Shah contested a LS election for the first time in 2019 and won Gandhinagar by 5.6 lakh votes.

While the state BJP did play its part in scripting the record win by galvanising the

Amit Shah has nurtured the seat diligently over the past five years

cadre, Shah nurtured his home constituency diligently over the past five years. Almost all infrastructure being planned for Ahmedabad's bid to host the 2036 Olympics is going to come up within Gandhinagar LS constituency limits. These include Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave, Naranpura Sports Complex and Olympic village at Manipur-Godhavi.

Gandhinagar ranks among the most significant seats in

In Gujarat's potato bowl, a plucky Congress legislator has denied BJP a hat-trick of clean sweep. Geniben Thakore gifted her party a consolation win in PM Narendra Modi's home state by trouncing rookie Rekhben Chaudhary by 31,000 votes in Banaskantha Lok Sabha seat.

The feisty Thakore community leader, who hit the campaign trail pitching herself as "Banas ni Ben (sister of Banas)", sent Rekhben packing in a finish that went down to the wire. This is the first time in 62 years that a woman candidate has romped home in Banaskantha, after Congress' Zohrehban Chavda won the seat in 1962. The victory margin may look small, but it was a tall order for the 47-year-old Geniben to sway the fortunes in Congress' favour, considering BJP won this seat by 3.69 lakh votes in 2019.

"It was a contest between Geniben and Shankar Chaudhary, and not Rekha Chaudhary," Gujarat Congress spokesperson Parthivraj Kathwadia said. "This is defeat of 'sarkar' (govt) and 'sahkar' (cooperatives), as Shankarhai used his clout, but in vain."

TEAM TOI

Prajwal fails, but Gowdas retain their Vokkaliga base

TEAM TOI

Bengaluru: In what can be considered retention of Vokkaliga support despite all odds, ex-PM HD Deve Gowda-led Janata Dal(S) won two of three Lok Sabha seats it contested in alliance with BJP.

JD(S) state chief HD Kumaraswamy defeated Congress' Venkataraman Gowda from Mandya by 2.8 lakh votes, avenging his son's defeat in 2019. Party candidate from Kolar reserved seat, Mallesh Babu, won with a margin of 1.27 lakh votes. Gowda's son-in-law and noted cardiologist CN Manjunath, fighting on a BJP ticket, defeated DK Suresh,

brother of deputy CM DK Shivakumar in his stronghold of Bengaluru Rural, by a massive 2.7 lakh votes.

"When Gowdas, especially Deve Gowda, are cornered politically, the Vokkaliga community supported them. This time also, they did the same," said a JD(S) functionary. The victories are likely to boost morale of the party hit by its drubbing in last year's assembly elections. Prajwal Revanna's alleged sex scandal, and efforts by Congress to split the party, a source said.

Meanwhile, Prajwal, jailed in sex scandal case, failed to retain the family's bastion of Hassan after three decades.

TEAM TOI

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Qualification (for both the posts): Candidates should have atleast a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce/ Science/ Arts/ Business Administration/Business Management from a recognised university.

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THE MORNING AFTER...

Cartoon by Sanjay Bhattacharya

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